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THE
Righteous Man's Evidence
FOR
HEAVEN:
OR, A
TREATISE

Shewing how every one, while he lives here,
may certainly know what shall become of him
after his departure out of this life.

By TIMOTHY ROGERS.
Preacher of God's word in Essex. *K*

Pfal. cvii. 43. Who is wise, that he may observe these things, for they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

2 Pet. i. 10. Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things ye shall never fall.

GLASGOW:

Printed by ALEX. ADAM.

For GABRIEL LAIRD, Bookseller in Greenock.
MDCCLXXXIV.



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THE
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Apology to the READER.

FAR was it from my meaning at the first, Christian Reader, thus to have exposed myself to the common view of men, but rather to have hidden this my weak conception for ever, never to have come to birth: but when it would abide no longer, to be imprisoned in the womb, but violently break forth, I thought to deal wisely with it, though not (as the Egyptians) cruelly to murder it, yet at least (as Moses' parents) charitably to hide it, for my own private use, or at the best to have put it to nurse in an obscure country village, where myself am pastor, to see the good usage of it, for which end I betruſted a friend or two for the printing of ſome copies, only for myſelf: but thro' friendſhip I was deceived; for whereas I expected a ſmall number, like the children of Iſrael, that went againſt Benhadad, like two little flocks of kids; my books were

sent forth in multitudes, like the Aramites that filled the country, 1 Kings xx. 27. Only this difference, they came not forth against the host of Israel, the people of God, (as did the Aramites) but rather to serve on their side. Thus being driven to a strait, (though that which is done, cannot be undone) yet I thought it my part to do what I could, namely, to mend and enlarge that which is done; that seeing it must be common, it may not be altogether unuseful; confessing ingenuously, I had rather it should not have been common, especially considering that there are better bred and nobler born treatises of very worthy men, concerning this subject: but thus it must be now, if therefore it may but serve as an hand-maid to theirs, so thou mayest reap some profit hereby, I have both my desire, and full contentment. Farewel.

Thine in the bond of faith and love,

TIMOTHY ROGERS

COUNSEL to the READER.

IN sailing thro' the seas of this trouble-
some world towards the heavenly land
of Canaan, we are to pass two dange-
rous rocks, the one called *presumption*; the
other *desperation*. Happy is the man, that
escaping them both, shall make a safe ar-
rival at the promised land. Millions of
Christians in profession are cast away a-
gainst the one, or against the other: for
some, though they have no true grace
wrought in them, think notwithstanding
that they are in no danger, but shall cer-
tainly be saved: which is as great pre-
sumption, as if a man being stricken thro'
the heart, should think himself very well,
and in no danger of death. Others when
they come to apprehend the heavy wrath
of God, and deadly curse of the law due
unto them by nature for sin, in hellish sor-
row utterly despair. Some sincere Chri-
stians also there are, against whom the
tempter doth so far prevail, that in behold-
ing their own unworthiness, they are ready
to faint, for fear of hell and condemna-
tion; which although they cannot perish

or suffer shipwreck against this rock of *desparation*, yet their poor bark may be so battered and beaten against it, as that peradventure they may be a long while after in rigging and mending of it up again, with grief and heart smart, that thou mayst escape these dangers, use these short questions and answers as a sea map, or guide unto thee, to shew thee thy way between both, that so thou mayst sail to heaven in more safety, confidence and comfort. Now to the end that the better use may be made hereof, consider I beseech thee of these things: First, what multitudes daily departing this world, throng in at the infernal gates of hell, for want of the assurance of their salvation. Secondly, consider that thou being by nature a condemned man, if thy pardon be not sealed to thy conscience, and given thee before the breath be once out of thy body, afterward though thou wouldest, or couldst give a thousand worlds for it, it cannot be had; consider again, of the uncertainty of thy life, thou canst not tell whether thou shalt be alive to morrow, for *thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*. Consider also the certain-

ty of thy death: die thou must, nothing surer; for who can stand against the power thereof! and, Oh how bitter is the remembrance of death to one that is not assured of his salvation? Further, consider how terrible the judgment day will be to all such as get not the assurance of their salvation in their life-time: which way will they turn themselves then? Oh what will they do? Mountains and hills fall upon us, and crush us in pieces, shall they cry, but it shall not be. Then what most doleful and intolerable torments shall they for ever endure in hell; able to break the hardest heart to think on? *Oh who shall dwell with the devouring fire, who shall dwell with the everlasting burning?* Lastly, consider of the most inestimable joys of heaven, and incomparable delights, which all they shall have, who get the assurance of their salvation in this life: *Such as the eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man conceived of:* O heavenly joy! O sweet delights! O excellent surmounting glory! O endless superabounding pleasures! where-with their hearts shall be ravished and ever replenished, upon these considerations, I

earnestly request thee, if thou has any pity
 or commiseration on thy poor soul, *Make*
thy calling and election sure, even while it is
called to day: How shall I do that, thou
 wilt say? This brief treatise will shew thee
 how, yea more than that; hereby thou may-
 est be assured of thy salvation, if thou use
 it rightly, but then thou must go through
 it with good advisement; if thou touch
 the honey-comb with thy lips, thou may-
 est find sweetness; but if thou suck, much
 more. So read these things, as to learn
 them, so learn, as to know thy own estate
 thereby, so mightest thou suck out the
 whole sweetness thereof; get the true stamp
 of them in thy heart, so thou mayest be
 sure thou shalt be saved: which the Lord
 of heaven grant for his mercies sake.
 Amen.

THE
RIGHTEOUS MAN'S
EVIDENCE for HEAVEN.

Minister.

SEEING opportunity serves us thus fitly (my CHRISTIAN friend) to confer a while together, and seeing there is no conference so comfortable or profitable as that which is about the affairs of God's kingdom, and our own salvation, and that the counsel of the Holy Ghost is, that if any speak, he should speak as the words of God, and that such communication should proceed out of our mouths; as is good for the use of edifying: give me leave therefore to propound a question to you about these matters.

Convert.

Sir, I like the motion passing well, and indeed there is too little of this good practice in these days; Christian communication grows too much out of use, which shews the want and scarcity of grace; for

there is the like correspondence between the heart and tongue, that is between the bell and clapper : if the bell be stirred, the clapper cannot lie still : and if the heart be moved with delight in spiritual things, the tongue cannot chuse but talk thereof : and where the tongue yields no other than an earthly sound, there you may be sure to find no other but an earthly heart, no pure good metal, no heavenly grace to be found in the heart. Now therefore let me hear the question, and according to my poor measure of knowledge, I will be ready to shape an answer.

Min. Ought not every one while he lives in this world, to know as a thing certain, whether he shall be saved, and so be translated out of this earthly tabernacle, into the heavenly paradise, whensoever he shall be called away by death ?

Con. Yes undoubtedly ; which I prove thus, *He that believeth, saith our Saviour, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned :* This must every one know as an undoubted truth ; and withal he is bound to know whether he believeth, according to that charge of the apostle. *Examine your-*

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selfes whether you be in the Faith: know you not that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? Hereupon it will follow, that every one must know whether he shall be saved; and therefore such as put their souls to a venture, cannot be saved, for as much as they take not the right course, appointed by God thereto; namely, to prove whether they be in the faith, and Christ in them. And further, whom the Lord intendeth to bestow heaven upon, he sets his *seal* and mark upon them, whereby he claims them for his own, and he bestows love-tokens on them, which are the saving graces of his Holy Spirit, whereof he is very charie, setting great store by them; so that he will not bestow them on cast-aways, but only on his dearly beloved ones: which marks and love tokens, as they are very precious, so as many as receive them, though they doubt, they need not doubt but that they shall be saved, for God is not variable in his love: but he that hath not these signs in him, whereby he may know that he shall be saved, shall, if he die in that comfortless state, be sure to have his portion with devils, *in the burning lake*, for ever after death.

Min. If the case stand so, I think it lies upon every one, not to dally with their own souls, as men do now-a-days, but to deal soundly, and consider sincerely with themselves, whether they have received these golden marks, and love tokens of God, or whether they still retain the black brand of the devil which they were born with, the which so long as they retain, the prince of darkness owes them; but if they can get it washed out by the blood of Christ, and God's marks set upon, then hath the devil no more right or claim unto them; for the Lord from that time forward even for ever, doth take them for his own peculiar ones: but what say you now of those that mourn after God, in the anguish of their souls, longing for the assurance of his favour, and labouring to get this knowledge of their salvation, but yet cannot find it in themselves?

Con. This I say, or rather Christ himself, *Blessed are they that (so) mourn, for they shall be comforted*; and though they now sorrow, yet their sorrow shall be turned into joy: nay great cause of rejoicing have they, that they can thus mourn; neither

is it possible for such to be without some sure signs whereby they may know that they shall be saved; for even this their practice, they being thus *sick of love*, longing and labouring after Christ, is a sure sign to them, though they should have no other: but indeed this cannot go alone.

Min. How comes it then to pass, that they take no notice hereof in themselves, but rather fear that they shall not be saved?

Con. Because they are either new-born babes in Christ, and therefore being as infants, though they be alive, yet have not as yet understanding to know that they are alive, which notwithstanding others of riper age discern in them, and they also by experience and growth in grace shall afterwards perceive in themselves; or else they are distempered with some strong fit of temptation, whereby they are so astonished and benumbed, that they have not a feeling of that which otherwise they might perceive in their souls: like as one half frozen, and almost stiff with cold, feels no warmth at all in himself, and yet there is some in him, for else there could be no life or breath remaining in him. Or lastly, such

they are as have taken a surfeit of sin, where-
 by they have been overcome; thus while
 they are foul-sick, their spiritual senses are
 corrupted, so as they cannot now see the
 lightsome countenance of God's favour shin-
 ing on them so clearly, nor hear the Lord
 speaking unto them, nor taste how good the
 Lord is to their souls in special, nor relish
 religious exercises so favourly, nor feel
 heavenly comforts so sensibly, as otherwise
 they might. And yet this surfeit they shall
 outgrow in time, by using themselves to a
 good diet of Christian practice, and by
 the help of the physic of God's word right-
 ly applied, which helped the prophet Da-
 vid in the like case, being distempered,
 Psal. xxxvii. 17. neither is it marvel though
 such do judge amiss of themselves, for the
 present, seeing we know that sick folks are
 not competent or meet judges of themselves;
 for they sometimes feel nothing but pain
 or sickness, whereas others know, that
 there is in them more health than sickness,
 or at least some health.

Min. Now then to come to yourself, for
 it is the part of every wise man, to be well
 acquainted with his own estate. Let me

little examine your evidences; have you some good assurance that you shall be saved.

Con. Yes, I praise God, else how could I have any comfort? Else my very meat should be turned into gall, and tears should be my drink; well might my eyes refuse all rest, and my soul all comfort knowing none other, but that I should go to the king of fear, into a land dark as darkness itself: And sure I am, the whole world with the best of all earthly things, cannot afford true, sound and substantial comfort, to the quieting of the conscience, and rejoicing of the heart.

Min. How do you know that you shall be saved?

Con. First, by that mother-grace, from whence all other saving graces flow, namely, true justifying faith; a spark of this pious faith I find is kindled in me, whereupon this I build; God hath promised, that *he which believeth shall be saved*: now then seeing I believe, that is, am truly persuaded that Christ is my Saviour, that he died for my sins and fulfilled the law, to procure me perfect righteousness, therefore I know I shall be saved.

Min. It is nothing to say you believe, but let me hear if you can prove it: how know you that yours is true faith, and not mere mock-faith, which is so rife in the world?

Con. Because it hath been rightly bred and begotten in me, and that by the spiritual feed of God's word, according to that saying of the apostle; *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*: thus then I came by faith; first, by hearing the doctrine of the law preached, I saw myself to be in a damnable condition by nature, a wretched sinner, yea, wholly sinful, and therefore accursed, by the just sentence of God's most righteous law, deserving nothing but the horrible wrath of God, and lying open to the vengeance of eternal fire, so that there was nothing between me and hell, but only a poor, simple, crazy, tottering life, which I knew not how soon or suddenly it might be surpris'd by death; the consideration whereof, wrought in me terror of conscience, dread of hell and condemnation, despairing of any hope or help in myself.

Min. And what then? did you rest quiet

in the sight of this your woful misery ?

Cou. Oh it was not possible my poor distressed soul should find any rest in this estate, nay, if I had heard no better tidings, I should have been swallowed up of despair: but then in the next place I came to understand that God hath anointed and sent his own Son to *preach good tidings unto the poor, recovering of sight to the blind, to bind up the broken hearted, and set at liberty such as are bruised*: more plainly. I learned by the doctrine of the gospel, that God of his rich mercy hath given his Son, Christ Jesus, very God and man, to be a Saviour unto sinful men, even to as many as believe in him, and hath not excluded me out of the number of those that shall be saved by him, but hath offered him unto me amongst others *which are weary and heavy laden with their sins*, saying, *come unto me all, (even all such)* and hath also commanded, yea, even intreated me, to believe in him: Thus my heart was drawn and won; to take him and apply him a Saviour to my own soul, thinking myself bound in conscience to yield obedience to the holy commandment, and gracious invitation of Al-

mighty God: and what a beast were I, if I should not accept of so free a profer of his Son, as he hath made unto me?

Min. Thus you have shewed me well how you came by faith, and I see you have come honestly by it: whereby it appears that it is not like Jacob's venison, too quickly found to be of the right kind, nor like Jonah's gourd, too suddenly sprung to continue long, but like the water of Bethlehem, much longed for, and hardly obtained; now shew me further how you use it; since you got it, what fruits doth it bring forth, whereby you may know more easily whether it be true, and *Faith unfeigned.*

Con. As fire may be discerned by heat, and life by motion, so may my faith by the fruits thereof: For first, it enableth me to *quench the fiery darts of that evil one*, to resist (not without some comfortable victories) the suggestions of Satan wherewith he buffeteth me; and more particularly, that same temptation of doubting whether the promises of God belong to me or no: for that I am not overcome of this doubting, and sunk under it, but struggle and wrestle

with it and with unbelief, that is, by the power of faith. Secondly, it makes me earnestly desire to be more and more reconciled to God, that is more fully assured of his favour, that I am at peace with him, and he well pleased with me ; to whom by nature I was an utter enemy : it makes me cry, *remember me, O Lord, with the favour of thy people, release thy anger towards me, turn thy face unto me, cause thy face to shine upon thy servant, and save me through thy mercy.* Thirdly, my faith makes me labour to please God, though it be with displeasing myself, and to do the will of God, yea, even in those things which cross my own will, as it caused Abraham to offer his dearly beloved Isaac, though otherwise it would have gone full sore against his heart ; and hereby Enoch was reported of, *that he had pleased God.* Fourthly, by it my heart is in some measure purified from noisome lusts and affections ; as secret pride, self-love, hypocrisy, carnal confidence, wrath, malice, and the like, in that they are distasteful, yea, loathsome to me, so that *the spirit within me fighteth against the flesh,* that is, grace resisteth and subdueth

corruption. Fifthly, it makes me long after Christ, to taste more fully of his sweetness, and to be kissed *with the kisses of his mouth*, that is, to have a greater measure of heavenly graces, and greater and more lively tokens of his love communicated to me; whom and whose love I do prefer above the whole world, even in my heart. Lastly, my faith brings forth in me the sweet fruit of heavenly and spiritual joy for, *believing in him whom we have not seen*, that is, Christ the Lord, *we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; which is therefore called the joy of faith, because it proceeds from thence: thus my faith is a working faith, and by these fruits and the like, I know it is not a vain fancy, and ungrounded imagination, but a sound and well-grounded perswasion, whereby I am ingrafted into Christ: for to believe, is to go out of ourselves, and to go into Christ.

Min. If these things be so, I am not able to object any thing against your faith, nay, all the devils in hell shall never be able to overthrow it: but by what other sign do you know that you shall be saved?

Con. Well may my conversion plead for

niority for the second place, it being of the
 same age with faith : for there is no soon-
 er true faith wrought in the heart, but in-
 stantly there is a new convert made, and a
 sinner *become the son of Abraham* ; and well
 may there then be joy in heaven for a sinner
 that is converted. So then there is an effectual
 calling and conversion wrought in me ;
 for the Lord of his unspeakable goodness
 hath delivered me out of the power of darkness,
 and translated me into the kingdom of his dear
 Son, that is, he hath brought me out of the
 miserable estate of our nature wherein I
 was born, into the happy estate of grace,
 wherein I now stand : this calling is a sure
 sign that one is ordained to everlasting life ;
 for, *whom the Lord hath called, those he
 hath also glorified* : therefore hereby I am
 comfortably assured of my salvation.

Ans. Our Saviour tells us, that there
 are many called, but few chosen : how then
 can this be a sign unto you ?

Con. There is a twofold calling of a
 Christian : an outward, and an inward ;
 the Lord calls outwardly all those to whom
 the gospel is preached ; for such he requires
 to come to him by believing and repenting,

that they might be saved, but many such refuse thus to come unto him, and therefore are not effectually called: like as if you should call a man that is in a dead sleep, who hears not, and therefore lies snorting still; it may be truly said, he was not called up, because he did not awaken and come unto you: so the outward calling by the voice of the gospel alone, is not sufficient to salvation, therefore the Lord calls his elect inwardly also by his Spirit, and this is that whereof I speak.

Min. But how know you that you are thus inwardly and effectually called and converted?

Con. 1. By the echoing back, and secret answering of my heart unto the voice and call of God, for the Lord saith, *Seek thou my face*; my heart answereth, *thy face, O Lord, will I seek*: *Come unto me* (saith he) *all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you*: and, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*; my heart answereth, O Lord, it is the desire of my soul to come unto thee, O that I could come, O how shall I come, help me that I may come, *draw me and I will run after*

bee; seeing my heart doth thus inwardly answer his call, it is a certain sign that I hear him call: which I could not, unless he did call inwardly and effectually.

Secondly, The Lord hath wrought in me a wonderful and supernatural change, so that I am contrary to that I was by nature, as touching the quality and disposition of my soul, now loving that good which then I hated, and hating now that evil which before I loved; therefore I am a new creature, and live a spiritual life, yea, Christ liveth in me: for by the power of the Spirit flowing into me from Christ my head, I live unto God, not unto myself; and I would be again in the condition wherein I was before, for all the world's good, but tremble to think upon it, accounting it as the suburbs and mouth of hell.

Min. I do verily believe you, for they which have thus seen and tasted of hell in their consciences, will take heed how they come near it again so long as they live: herein is that verified, *The burnt child dreads the fire.* But name unto me a third sign of your salvation.

Con. Methinks I see justification offer-

ing itself and coming forth hand in hand with conversion, as being the daughters of one mother faith, and two sisters born at one birth, hand-fast by the Holy Ghost. Rom. viii. 30. never to be severed: so then I am justified, that is, I am accepted of God perfectly righteous through Christ. this sign never fails, for *whom God justifies, them he also glorifies.*

Min How can you prove, that you are thus justified?

Con 1. Because it is the daughter of that noble parent, faith; which faith being in me, I am thereby only justified, and not by works, unless it be to declare me just before men, for I cannot be so popishly fond as to think that men must lick themselves whole with their own righteousness.

2. Whereas justification consists in two things; the remission of our sins for Christ's passions' sake, and the imputation of his perfect righteousness to us, I have some proof of both: for first, I know that God doth pardon and forgive me all my sins, for I do heartily confess them to him, with a detestation of them: and if we confess our

sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, as faith the apostle. Secondly, I know that God doth reckon Christ's righteousness unto me, as verily as if I had personally performed it myself: this I know by my peace of conscience; for they which are thus justified by faith have peace towards God, and they only: thus am I one of those that have washed their long robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Min, Indeed if the conscience be truly pacified, it is evident that you are partaker of Christ's perfect righteousness: for what else can give the conscience true peace, and not the drunken peace of hypocrites?

Con. 1. Because it hath followed grievous trouble and unquietness in my conscience, as a calm follows after a storm: for such as never were afflicted in mind, and distressed in conscience, never had true peace. 2. My peace of conscience makes me careful to keep a good conscience, as it made the apostle, *desiring to live honestly, and to have my conversation in godly pureness.* 3. This true peace makes my conscience not afraid to view itself: where-

as the evil conscience is like the elephant, which being sensible of his deformity, cannot abide to look on his own face in the water, but seeks muddy channels and foul puddles.

Min. Let me hear you name some other sign, from whence you gather assurance of your salvation.

Con. Mine adoption is a sign hereof: for whereas I was by nature a base born child of Satan, and no child so like his father as he was like him, the Lord of his free grace and favour hath adopted me his child, to train me up unto eternal life, that I may inherit with his own Son Jesus; by means whereof I have right also to the creature here in this world, as being my father's goods; and the miseries of this life become mercies to me, and the glorious angels, become attendants on me: O high favour, O rich mercy, O inestimable dignity, to be the child of God! Thus I trust I am one of the number of God's children. Now none of them can possibly be deprived of an everlasting inheritance, *for if we be children, then are we also heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Seeing then I am one

of them ; I know I shall inherit together with them, yea, with Christ.

Min. It is a common thing with men, yea, with lewd and graceless persons, to say they are the children of God, as the wicked Jews said to our Saviour ; but he tells them, they are of their father the devil : how know you then that you are a true child of God ?

Con. r. Because I am regenerate, that is, born again ; *not of blood*, as by a second natural generation, *nor of the will of the flesh*, as by any natural strength or action, *nor of the will of man*, as by any man's endeavour or operation, *but of God, born of the Spirit*, as water through spiritual washing and ablution, being *begotten by the incorruptible seed of his Word*. They which are thus begotten and born of God, must needs be his children : and that I am thus born of the Spirit, and so become a new creature, I have shewed before, in that I am converted. Secondly, look what natural affections are in a child towards his father, such spiritual affections are in me towards God : if he frown, I mourn ; if he threaten, I tremble ; if he smite, I stoop ; if he

smile, I am right glad; if he speak comfortably, I rejoyce heartily: I delight in nothing so much as the favour of God, fear nothing so much as the loss of it: having found it, Oh how fain would I keep it: having lost it, I cannot be at quiet till I recover it: I can be content to want all things so I have it, and can find contentment in nothing if I want it; my heavenly Father's favour is more to me than all the world. Thirdly, I know my adoption, by the spirit of adoption which is within me, and casts out of me daily more and more the spirit of bondage, a terrifying and tormenting conscience: and it makes me with some confidence, and a true heart unfeignedly to call upon God, and to call him my Father without either flattery, or dissembling. Fourthly, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*: by his Holy Spirit am I led, and willingly do I submit myself, and unfeignedly desire to be wholly governed thereby: I desire not to follow the blind guide, carnal reason, nor the deceitful guide, my own corrupt heart, but *I set the Lord always before me*, as a guide to direct me in all things, by that

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rule, whereby *he leads into all truth*, even his holy word: it is my delight, to say with the prophet David, *Lead me in thy truth, O Lord, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation*. Fifthly, whereas all the children of God do resemble him their Father (for howsoever a man may have a child nothing like him, yet God hath never a child, but is in some measure like him) hereby I also know that I am his child, because I do in some sort resemble him my heavenly Father. As he is holy merciful, good, perfect; so do I endeavour to conform unto him, having his blessed image imprinted in me, and being renewed unto that likeness, wherein the Lord created man in the beginning; abhorring to be of the number of them, who though they profess themselves to be God's children, yet are as Nabal, so profane and wicked, *that a man cannot speak unto them*; and surely, blasphemy it were to think that there is any likeness between God and them, he such a pure Spirit, and they such impure swine.

Min. Proceed unto some other sign of your salvation.

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Con. The Lord will bestow an everlasting inheritance upon all those that are sanctified; such a one am I, the Lord hath sanctified me by his Holy Spirit, that is, hath made me holy, whereas I was before, most vile, filthy and unclean, wholly sinful: Neither yet am I now quite and clean freed from all sin, or perfectly holy; for alas, *I see another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity of the law of sin:* but I am freed from the bondage and dominion of sin. And look as in the twilight or day-break, some little glimmering light there is overspreading the sky, yet mixed with much darkness: even so there is in me the admixture of sin, and much corruption accompanying the light of sanctifying grace, in every part of me; yet this is my comfort, *that the day star is risen and the morning light now shineth in me;* and as for high noon, perfection of holiness, I wait for it, and look to enjoy it in the highest heaven: *for the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

Min. There are not a few, who though

they can talk of Sanctification, are notwithstanding very profane, yea, leprous persons having the unclean issues of sin, like plague sores running on them, going up and down with the lepers, cry in their mouth *unclean, unclean*, therefore how know you that you are truly sanctified?

Con. If I could not shew a difference between myself and such unclean beasts, I should be sorry: thus then I prove the truth of my sanctification: whereas it consists in two things, namely, mortification and quickening, I have some proof of both; for the first, *I mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit*: wherein I imitate the skilful Surgeon, who being to cut off some incurable member, first mortifieth it, that so it being made insensible, may be cut off more easily, and with less pain to the patient. And this course I take in mortifying my sins: First, I labour by searching to find them out: Secondly, to find myself weary of them, and willing to be rid of them, considering what infinite hurt they do me. Thirdly, I fetch power from the death of Christ, believing that he died to kill sin in all that are his, and therefore

that is impossible for them to live unto sin, or sin to rule in them. 4. I apply this power of Christ's death, as a strong corrosive, to this proud flesh of mine, to the wounding and killing of the sin that is in me: and thus I apply it; 1. Seeing that my sins put Christ to death, I am resolved, as the avenger of blood, to follow the law upon them, to get a *scriptum est*, a writ for them, to do by them, as they did by him, even to pursue them unto death, which put my elder Brother and Saviour unto death. Secondly, seeing I believe, that Christ died for me, to kill sin in me, I see I neither must nor can suffer sin to live, and reign in me: for that were to make the death of Christ of none effect unto me. Thus then though sin be in me, yet it hath received the deadly wound, by the death of Christ, never after to recover again, but lies as Saul thrust through with his spear; though life be still abiding in it, it is gasping, and struggling, languishing and dying, and shall at last be utterly extinct in death. I thank God therefore through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Min. You have spoken to some good

purpose, of mortification: but what say you of quickening, which is the second part of sanctification?

Con. They which have the one, cannot want the other; therefore I find also a quickning power of grace in me, whereby I rise up out of the grave of sin, and live unto righteousness, and that after this manner; 1. I labour by enquiring to find out that righteousness, which God requireth of me. 2. I strive for a willingness of mind and heart, to set thereupon with all delight: which that I may do, I fetch power from Christ's resurrection, considering and believing, that he revived and rose again, for this very end, namely, to procure, and give to all that are his, strength and power, to live unto righteousness, and therefore that it is as impossible for any such to want this power, as for Christ to die in vain. 4. I apply this power to myself, whereby the breath of spiritual life comes into my soul, and that after this manner: Seeing I believe that Christ rose for me, as verily as he is my Saviour, so verily must I, and shall I, shew forth this spiritual power in the practice of piety, and

righteous living : Thus then there is a spiritual passion, and resurrection in me, as there is in every true believer, answerable to the passion and resurrection of Christ as he died for sin, and rose again for righteousness, so I die to sin, and rise again to righteousness, in all the powers of my soul and parts of my body, these being made the *instruments* of those, in righteousness unto God. And this briefly is that sanctification which I find in me.

Min. And surely this is that, which whosoever find in them, they are no less than canonized in the court of heaven for saints and irrevocably registred in God's calendar of saints. But what will you name in the next place, for a sign of your salvation?

Cor. Repentance, which howsoever it doth not really differ from sanctification, yet in some respect (as some have well observed) it doth, as being subordinate thereto and proceeding there-from as a fruit thereof; for where the Lord infuseth sanctifying grace into the understanding, will, and affections of the convert, then according unto this grace received, he worketh

turning to the Lord : and though repentance be discerned before either faith, or sanctification ; yet that hinders not, but that they are before it in order of nature ; like as in the morning, the light and sunbeams are seen before the body of the sun, and yet in order of nature it is before them, and they proceed from it. But to come nearer the matter : I repent me of my sins ; for I turn from all sin to God, in heart, and desire, and labour to express the same by a careful framing of my life in obedience to God, eschewing evil, and doing good, having respect unto all God's commandments. Now God hath promised, that he which thus *turneth from all his sins, shall surely live for ever, and shall not die eternally* ; therefore hereby I know I shall be saved : for this is a saive for all sores, and a present remedy, to cure all spiritual diseases of the soul.

Min. All the doubt will be, whether you do truly repent, how can you make that appear ?

Con. Thus : First, because I grieve in my heart for my sins, chiefly, in regard that thereby I offend my good God, who

always hath been, and is abundantly gracious unto me: this pierceth my soul, that I should be so undutiful towards him. Secondly, I hate, loath and detest in some measure, all sin in my heart, bearing myself toward it as an enemy; and when I have been overcome by the deceit thereof, I love it not the better, but hate it much the more afterwards, when I have recovered myself again. I deal with my sin as Ammon dealt with his sister Tamar, who when he had satisfied his wicked lust, did hate her more than ever he had loved her before, and thrust her out of his company and presence, as not abiding the sight of her. Thirdly, I resolve in truth with a constant purpose, and settled determination, not to do any thing that I know to be sin, and so displeasing to the Lord; the Lord he knows, that I do not purpose to maintain myself in any known sin whatsoever. Fourthly, I strive, and endeavour in the whole course of my life, to forsake every known sin, and to come to the sight of unknown sins, which as yet I have not taken notice of, that I may forsake them also. I do as heartily desire to forego

fins, as to have them forgiven; to part
 with them as to have them pardoned:
 whereas the man unregenerate, will at no
 hand part with his sin: *for it is sweet in his
 mouth, he hides it under his tongue, he spares
 and forsakes it not, but keeps it still within
 his mouth,* as Zophar speaks, he will as
 soon part with a limb, nay, his life, as
 with his sweet sin: But for my part, I de-
 sire that the blood of Christ may as well
 wash away the filthiness of my sin, as the
 guiltiness thereof. 5. I bring forth the
 right and kindly fruit of true repentance,
 namely, new obedience, which cannot pos-
 sibly grow out of any other root than this:
 thus it is my continual care to walk in all
 the commandments, and ordinances of the
 Lord without reproof.

Min. But is not all this that you do, for
 fear of hell, and condemnation only.

Con. No surely, but partly for love I
 bear to God; and partly for hatred I
 bear to sin: for though I knew there were
 no day of judgment, when men shall give
 an account of all their doings, and receive
 a full reward according thereunto; or
 though I could be assured there were no hell

to take vengeance on wicked doers. y^e would I never commit those foul and filthy sins which I see some commit continually to my grief: though they are well pleasing to sinful corrupt nature, and so were to me, while I was carnal, now I do abhor them.

Min. It seems you make true grief for sin a sign of true repentance: shew me then how godly sorrow, which is only in the faithful, may be known from worldly sorrow, which causeth death, and was in Cain, Saul, Ahab, Herod, Judas, and may be in any reprobate.

Con. He that hath godly sorrow is at least perswaded, that his sins are pardonable: not that they are *greater than may be forgiven*, as Cain said; but that they may be pardoned by the infinitely far-surpassing mercy of God. 2. He loves the preacher and other well disposed persons, that tell him of his faults, and shew him his sins: though haply reproving him sharply for them: and he reverenceth and regardeth God's word the more, that he sees his sin discovered, and condemned thereby: the contrary was in Ahab, who hated the pro

phet because he dealt plainly with him; and Herod, who deprived John the Baptist, both of liberty and life, because he touched his copy-hold, in reproving his incestuous life. 3. Godly sorrow drives a man nearer to God by prayer, and makes him seek to the minister, and to the godly-wife for counsel; to the word, and spiritual means for comfort: but the sorrow of the world drives a man further from God and the means; as in Saul, who went to a witch, and Judas who hanged himself, both of them hasting to get as far from God, as the most remote place in all the world, even hell itself could make them. Fourthly, the sorrow of him that is truly penitent, is most occupied about the evil of sin; the sorrow of others, most about the evil of punishment, all their care and thoughts are taken up therewith: and were it not for that, the evil of their sin should not trouble their minds, or disquiet them one whit.

Min. You named new obedience, for a note of true repentance, and that not amiss if it be true, unfeigned, and of the right kind. But how prove you this?

Con. First, because it is obedience of

the whole man, inward, as well as outward: for a true' obedienciary unto God, must be both sound, and streight; sound in heart, and streight in life, all over obedient; though he be not perfect. Secondly, it is obedience, yielded to the whole law of God, to precept as well as promise, and to one precept as well as to another: whereas they which are false hearted in obedience, are also lame therein, and will be dispensed withal in some things; they can be content that some of their sins should die, with the lean cattle slain by Saul, but they have some one or two, or more fat sins, which they will needs have spared. I praise God (in humility I speak it) I have no such reservation in my obedience; but that my master-sins, and darling sins, should be put to the sword, as well as others of inferior rank. Thirdly, it is performed in the whole course of my life; it doth not take me now and then at times, like the fit of an ague, but is constant, and continual. For a man may cross the way to heaven oftentimes, in, and out, and yet never come thither; but he that holds on constantly in the way, shall be sure of

heaven. This true obedience in all these respects is Catholic, that is, universal: and they, and none but they, deserve the name of good Catholics indeed, which are careful to yield to God this true and universal, though imperfect obedience.

Min. Hitherto you have mentioned such graces as are more general, and concern the whole person renewed: now if you think good, alledge some special graces, which make their abode in several seats of the soul: and first for knowledge, which resideth in the mind, is not this a sign of salvation, which you discern in yourself?

Con. Saving knowledge is indeed a true sign, which is called *the unction of the Holy One*, and *Christ's eye-salve*; because the understanding, being as it were anointed therewith, is enlightened to see, and discern those things, which before it neither did, nor could; it comprehendeth *spiritual understanding*, that is, a right conceiving of the truth of God, and *wisdom*, that is, a right applying thereof, wisely and discernedly, to all our particular actions, for the right ordering thereof: this knowledge of God is *life eternal*; both because it is

the beginning thereof, as also because it is the means whereby we attain thereto: now then seeing I have found this knowledge, I am sure I cannot lose eternal life.

Min. Every one is a beast by his own knowledge: he therefore that wants this knowledge of God, doth not much differ from a brute beast: and better were it to be born a beast, than being born a man, to become thus like a beast. But how do you prove that yours is this saving knowledge, and not rather that common knowledge of God's word and religion, which may be in the very reprobates?

Con. This will appear better by comparing them together. First then, the common knowledge which may be found in reprobates is general: they understand spiritual things in a general confused manner; not unlike the blind man cured by our Saviour, who at the first opening of his eyes, saw men aloof off, walking as trees: they cannot abide to bring it home to themselves; but I apply my knowledge to myself, desiring to know chiefly, how things stand at home in my own soul. Secondly, their knowledge is partial; they desire not

use it be acquainted with all the ways of God,
re to: at are, and will be wilfully ignorant of
now: me things; they will not know that to
life. evil, which they like well of, nor that
own to be good which they do dislike, though
s this be made plain and evident unto them:
differ but I desire to know the whole truth of
it to God, yea, that which is disrelishing at the
man, first unto me. Thirdly, their knowledge
ow douffs them up with pride; they be not a
now- little proud thereof: but mine humbles
now- me: for the more light of knowledge shin-
which eth in me, the more I see the corruptions
npar- of my heart, and life thereby; which mini-
com- ster greater matter daily of humiliation to
in re me. Fourthly, all that they know, or speak,
d spi is only from here-say; for they have no
ner; experience thereof in themselves; they
ur Sa know, and learn God's truth by rote, but
eyes, learn it by heart, my knowledge is ex-
they perimental; I find the truth thereof in
them mine own experience. Fifthly, their know-
o my- ledge is not joined with conscionable prac-
things tice: whereas that is but raw knowledge
ndly, that is not well digested into practice: these
e not two should always go inseparably together;
for knowledge without practice is lame,

and practice without knowledge is blind. And if the lame and blind were hated David's soul, much more are these hateful to the soul of the Lord, as an abominable sacrifice: but my knowledge is practical, it walks upon the feet of my practice, and my practice sees with the eye of my knowledge: *hereby we know that we know God, if we keep his commandments* 1 John ii. 3. Though, then, there be many which know Christ to profess him, which notwithstanding shall not be known of him, for he will say unto them in that day *Depart from me, I know you not*, because they have not the saving knowledge of him, yet I can thus bring proof, that I rightly know him, or rather am known of him, whereby I also know that I shall hereafter live and reign for ever with him.

Min. Thus, it appears that the true knowledge of Christ doth counterpoise, yet and far excel all other knowledge whatsoever: for if one know Christ, it matters little tho' he be ignorant of other things; but if he be ignorant of Christ, it matters nothing though he know all things; wherefore the wisest worldly men, with all their

knowledge, shall perish for want of knowledge. So that I can well assent unto him, who saith, that the knowledge of God, is necessary an art for Christians, as the art of husbandry is for husbandmen. Now, if you think it good, name another special grace, as the sign of your salvation.

Con. I have a true hope of eternal life: which whoso have, they shall be saved; for *we are saved by hope*: as saith the apostle. His grace also the Lord of his mercy hath purchased me, to be as *an anchor to my soul, both sure and steadfast*, to hold me to the port, that I be not driven back with disastrous storms; and that bears up my head above water, in the seas of dangers, in this present world, that I sink not.

Min. But the hope of most men is a false hope, and desperate madness, (as if a man having his throat cut, or being thrust thro' the heart, should yet to hope to live, every body would be ready to deride his idle fantasies, or at least to pity his extreme folly) the hope of such *shall perish and be cut off, and their trust shall be as a spider's web*: how now you then that yours is a true hope?

Con. Truth it is, that the common hope

of men is such, that they do rather dream than hope: and tho' they think they have fast hold of it in their hearts, yet it is but as a child that catcheth at the shadow of the wall, he thinks he holds it fast closed in his hand, but when he openeth his hand there is nothing in it; so when their hearts shall be laid open before God, the shadow like hope being vanished, there shall be no such thing found in their hearts, and they shall have hope to seek, when it will be too late to find it. First, therefore I prove that my hope is true, from the foundation whereon it is grounded, and that is faith: for as it is impossible for a mighty castle to hang in the air, or to stand without either ground or foundation: even so, and much more impossible is it for hope to be, or abide without faith. Such therefore, that boast of hope, and are barren of faith, may well be said to dream of building castles in the air: I contrariwise believe, and therefore do I hope, apprehending the promise of God by faith; and so hoping and looking for the performance and accomplishment thereof: which faith, the ground-work, I have formerly proved to be effectually

ally begun in me. Secondly, true hope follows an effectual calling: for first God calls men to salvation, and then he gives them to hope for it; therefore the apostle calls it, the *hope of his calling*. Such therefore, as hope for heaven, not being effectually called unto it, come before they are called, and are like to speed accordingly. I was death to rush into the presence of Chasuerus uncalled, and sure eternal death will cut them off short, of coming home, which rush rudely into the *Holiest of all*, the inner court of God almighty, even the highest heaven, being never inwardly and truly called thither: but well may I hope, for I am truly called, as I have also proved before. Thirdly, my hope makes me use diligently all good means appointed by God, for the obtaining of salvation; for he that hath good hope to obtain his wished desire, will shew it by his industrious use of the best means, for the compassing thereof: so he that in the morning hopes to be fifty miles off by sun-set, will not sit him down to lay himself to sleep, but get on horseback, and be riding onward on his way; and he that hopes to live long, will not

starve himself, but use the best diet for preserving his life. Fourthly, it makes me myself by holiness, for that which I hope for, namely, the full fruition of the glorious presence of the perfectly-pure, and only God in heaven, according to that of the apostle, *Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as God is pure*: unlike to one who hoping to get access to the presence of the king with his petition, doth address himself in all suitable manner, both in apparel, behaviour and speech, for the presence of his sovereign.

Min. It appears your hope is founded good, even that *which maketh not ashamed* and the God of hope fill you therewith, and grant that you may abound therein through the Holy Ghost. But by what other sign you know that you shall be saved?

Con. I find in my heart a true love to God: now I have learned out of the word that *the Lord hath promised the crown of life to them that love him*, &c. I make no question but he will be as good as his word who never failed therein, since the world began; therefore I know that the crown of life is mine.

Min. All say they love God, and profess great friendship to him: *nevertheless most flatter him with their mouth, and lie unto him with their tongues, for their heart is not right with him.* How know you then that you love him in truth?

Con. Whereas there are three things in love, affection to the thing beloved, a desire of conjunction with it, and a well pleasing contentment taken in the enjoying of it, all these I find in some measure in me, toward my God, so that I know I love him truly; which I further prove by these notes: First, because I prize and estimate him above all worldly things; yea, mine own life: so that I can truly say with that blessed martyr Ignatius, I esteem no visible thing, nor yet invisible, so that I may have Christ: *yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss in comparison of him, and do count them but dung, that I may win him.* Neither is this a mercenary love, hired with the wages of reward: for, though there were no heaven, O Lord, I would love thee; but seeing there is a heaven, I will account of it, and labour to obtain it; yet still will I love thee for thy goodness sake, O Lord:

for thou thyself art reward enough, tho' there were no more. Secondly, I am careful and unfeignedly desirous to please the Lord in all things; even as we see, that men are loth to cross or displease those whom they entirely love and esteem. Hereupon I give myself to love that which he loveth, and to hate that which he hateth. *He loveth righteousness, and hateth wickedness,* and so do I, though not in equality, for that is impossible, yet in similitude, and conformity; for it is required and expected, as the prophet saith. *They that love the Lord hate evil,* thus I endeavour myself as God is, even so to be in this world. Thirdly, a man may know his love to any thing, by the zeal and heat of affection whereby he is carried to that thing which he loveth. Thus every man is transported and as it were eaten up with one zeal or other; some with the zeal of pleasure, as Esau was, who for a mess of pottage sold his birthright; some with the zeal of honour, as Absalom was, who for to get a kingdom, sought to draw blood from his own father; some with the zeal of money, as Judas was, who for his thirty pieces sold

is Lord and Saviour. By my zeal, I know my love to God: for though I be not eaten up with zeal as David was, Oh I would I were so too, yet I feel it burning within me, as Jeremiah did: *My heart is hot within me, and the fire kindled*: my zeal carrieth me to God. Fourthly, I love his word, and sacraments, prayer, and all other holy exercises; whereby as I have gracious intercourse, and heavenly conference, with the blessed Trinity; so in especial with Christ my well-beloved, who therein causeth me to hear his sweet voice, and to see his lovely countenance: for which cause I do love the house of God, so that I can no more heartily than merrily sing the note of the prophet David; *O Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth*; and another of the same, *O Lord of hosts, how amiable are thy tabernacles! my soul longeth, yea, even to enter, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and flesh cry out for the living God*. Fifthly, I love his messengers and ambassadors the teachers of his word, which are sent unto us from God, to treat about conclusions of peace, beseeching me in Christ's stead to be

reconciled to God. O how beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth these good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation to me! Sixthly, I long for the coming of Christ, not as though I could no longer bear (for impatience) the miseries of this life, which are but light in comparison of the weight of glory, but that I might be married for ever unto Christ, my love, in perfect joy, and hearts delight, being now but espoused only to him, and that I might be perfectly freed from all sin (whereby I grieve both him and myself) and always praise his name in heaven, *How long, Lord, how long? Thou hast said, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.*

Min. Thus it appears that the love of God will warrant a man (as it doth you) no less than heaven: but what say you now of love to God's people? may not that be ranked among the evidences of your salvation?

Con. Yes without doubt. For, *hereby we know*, saith St. John, *that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*, these do I love, that is, the children

of God, and such as are godly, and these will I love for ever; knowing, that love is such a debt, as I shall be always owing: and yet I must, and will be ever paying; I will strive to be rather a creditor, than a debtor herein, and will not only return to the saints of God the love of love, the same measure that I receive from them, but even usury and advantage of love: and I would to God there were as many payed use for love, as do in these days pay use for money. Then should they be no whit impoverished, less in the usurers books, and more in Gods: and so would it be a better world.

Min. Whereas you say you love the godly, it may be that is only because they are friendly to you, or because you receive, or hope to receive some outward kindness and benefit from such: if your love be no other than this, it is but self-love, being grounded merely upon your own private commodity: and this kind of love may be found in an unregenerate and carnal man.

Con. It is not so with me, for though I may regard some such for some such respect as you name, yet if I should

not love the child of God for his own sake, more than I love my worldly friend for my commodities sake; or my kinsman for nearness of blood, I should be void of any spark of true heavenly love. Therefore I chiefly love the godly for their goodness and godliness sake: the ground of my love unto them, is the image of God in them. This is that divine load-stone, which draws my affection toward them.

Min. How can you make it appear, that you love them with a right affection?

Con. Thus: 1. Because I love some such in the abstract, even when they are severed and separate from all external respects and grounds of love to me-ward; as when I hear or read of the zeal, piety, constancy, heavenly virtues, and gracious endeavours of the worthy servants of God, such as I never knew, nor had any dealing with; yet I find, that I love them, and feel the affection of my heart spreading itself towards them, to embrace them: which cannot be for carnal respects, nor worldly hopes, for it may be some of them are dead and gone, and thus I love the saints departed, which are now in heaven: some

times also I have known and loved some worthy Christians, who then have flowed with worldly prosperity, but after have fallen to a very low ebb of great adversity: when the world hath bid them adieu, and friends, wealth, goods, have altogether taken their leaves; yet then have I loved them as dearly as ever I did before: whereby it appeareth, that my love was not grounded upon worldly regards, which all forsook them; but upon their goodness and godliness, which still continued with them. Secondly, I much affect the godly, and delight exceedingly in their company, yea, of such as are nothing of kin unto me, that *we may be edified, through our mutual faith*, whereas I care not for the company of others wanting true godliness, though they may be perhaps of my near kindred. So that I can truly say, *As for the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent, in them is my delight*; but as for others, *I have bated the assembly of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked*: and if of necessity I be forced to be in their company, then am I ready to wish with the prophet, O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away,

and be at rest; or if this will not set me at liberty, then I take up woe to express my misery, *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesecb, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.* 3. I have a fellow-feeling of the miseries of the saints, my dear Christian brethren and sisters: which works in me compassion, and makes my heart even ake, and bowels yearn within me, to see their grief, and behold them in necessity. Whereby I perceive that I have the true affection of a fellow member, for, *if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.* Fourthly, I find in me a willingness, in some measure, to impart myself unto them, in life and goods, soul and body, so far as I can, to afford them help and succour: for, as it is truly said of faith, it is wholly copulative, wholly employed in coupling us to Christ; so may it as truly be said of love, that it is wholly communicative, employed in imparting itself, and what it hath, to others, for their good. Faith is as the leads and pipes to bring in, and love is as the cock of the conduit to let out. Now for as much as my love is thus communicative to the children of God, because they are his children, hereby I also see, that it is of the right kind.

Min. Alledge some other sure sign of your salvation. For, the more, the better man: the richer you are in true treasure, the more comfort may you have thereby.

Con The Lord hath promised to *fulfil the desire of them that fear him*; and that *he will bear their cry, and will save them*. Now find in some measure in me the true fear of God: and though I say not of myself, as the scripture saith of Obadiah, that *he feared God greatly*: yet this I can say, that I desire to fear God greatly; and this I dare say in despite of the devil, that I fear God truly. Therefore I shall be saved certainly, according to God's holy Word of truth.

Min. Saint John tells us, that *there is no fear in love, but that perfect love casteth out fear*. Seeing then you love God, how can you be said to fear him? How can these two stand peaceably together?

Con. Very well: for, there is a two fold fear of God: the first is a slavish and servile fear, in horror to dread his Majesty, as a severe revenging Judge, either executing his judgments, or ready to take vengeance on his enemies. Thus all im-

penitent persons, and the devils fear him, and only thus; and therefore hate him, wishing there were no God. And this is the meaning of Saint James, when he saith, *The devils believe and tremble.* The second is a child-like fear, in awful reverence, and love towards God, to be careful not to offend him: now this fear is the true and natural birth of love; being bred and brought forth of it. Look then, as Sarah cast out Ishmael, the seed of the bond-woman, but would not cast out her dear son Isaac: even so the love of God doth cast out of me, by degrees, the seed of bondage, the slavish fear, but not her own birth, the awful and holy fear of God; but cherisheth and nourisheth this continually in me, and is a nurse unto it; so that now I fear not so much that God will condemn me, as that I may not offend him, so good, so loving a father to me: even as a good ingenuous child fears to offend his father for very love; but fears not that his father will cut his throat, or murder him, seeing he knows he loves him dearly.

Min. Many say they fear God, and yet do but lie against the truth: how know

that yours is this true child-like fear of God?

Con. First (as I have said) because it follows upon the former sign of salvation; namely, the love of God, and is an inseparable companion thereof, as another truth hanging upon her mother Naomi: for love in fear, and fear in love is a sound testimony of the true fear of GOD. Secondly, it worketh in me marvellous humility towards God, and causeth me in awful respect unto his glorious Majesty, to abase myself as sinful dust and ashes before his blessed presence: as Jacob's fear of his brother Esau, made him humble himself, and bow to the ground seven times before him. Thirdly, it makes me afraid of sin, and to flee from it as Moses fled from his rod when it became a serpent: it makes me fear to commit sin secretly, as well as openly, for, though no eye do see me, I set the Lord always before me, which kept Joseph from committing folly, though he might have done it closely and covertly enough. Fourthly, it makes me hate sin: for, *The fear of the Lord*, saith Solomon, *is to hate evil*, yea, inward cor-

ruptions, which stick in the cranies of the
soul, and cannot be described, but by
very narrow search; it causeth my heart
to rise up against rebellious lusts, which
lie lurking within: as secret atheism, pride,
vain-glory, hypocrisy, envy, and the like.
Fifthly, it makes me *depart from every evil*
way, and from iniquity, to break off the
practice of sin, in the course of my life
to be a discontinuer in the way of sinners
and a resident in the paths of righteousness.
Sixthly, this true fear of God dispelleth
so far as it prevaileth in me, all other false
fears; as fear of men, of poverty, of dis-
grace, of death, &c. whereas men void of
the fear of God, are full of fond, and fool-
ish fears; they fear the crossing of an har-
bour, the howling of a dog, the crying of a
raven, Fairies, yea, fancies, and their own
shadows: as therefore wicked men may
justly fear every thing, because he feareth
not God; so contrariwise, the righteous
man needs fear nothing else, because he
feareth him. This one thing then will I fear
that I may fear nothing but God: and thus
I may rightly fear him, *O knit my heart*
near unto thee, O Lord, that I may fear thy
name.

Min. I am glad to see you so well stored of this divine grace and rare commodity, the fear of God: Oh, I would many thousands had more of this good ware in their store houses, their hearts. But how else are you assured, that you shall be saved?

Con. The Lord of his goodness hath given me to taste of the first fruits of the heavenly Canaan already, as a pledge of the plenary possession thereof hereafter: he hath given me that spiritual joy, which is a heaven upon earth. And like as the cluster of grapes brought from the brook Eshcol, with other fruits, was an earnest to Israel of the future inheriting of the earthly Canaan: even so is this joy to me, of inheriting that goodly, that heavenly land, (whereof this is some of the right fruit) the kingdom of glory: and I can bring St. Peter to be bound for my truth in this point; for thus he speaks of them that *rejoice with this joy unspeakable, and full of glory, that they shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.*

Min. True joy, I hold well, is a good pledge of heaven: but how prove you, that yours is true joy? For who seem more

merry, more frolicsome, or jocund, than ignorant, worldly, yea, ungodly men? they seem to have as light hearts as any; and indeed, in my judgment, too light to be poised, and settled with the weight of grace; in a word, too light to be good.

Con. Well have you said, that they seem so joyful; and now have you spoken the best you can of them: for indeed they seem and do but only seem so: their joy is like the laughing of a man in his sleep, who dreaming of some very pleasing delights, rejoiceth in his imagination thereat; but when he awaketh he findeth no such cause: even such is the joy of the wicked; they do but laugh in their sleep, and the devil shall give them such a greeting and good-morrow one day, as shall make it manifest. And therefore well saith Solomon of such, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.* Now therefore that mine is not this base-born joy, but of a nobler descent, but sound and good, I prove it thus: First, because she is an handmaid to the right noble and renowned Lady, Faith: she never goes alone, but is always following her. For

first, I believe through faith, that I am reconciled to God, and then hereupon I rejoice, being thus at peace with him : and for this cause it is called, *the joy of Faith*, Secondly, it issueth out of the right vein and fountain : it springeth out of the bitter root of godly sorrow, and grief of heart for sin : neither can any come to drink of this water of life, this heavenly joy, till they have first drunk of the water of Marah, bitter, yet godly sorrow ; as our Saviour tells his disciples, *your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. Thirdly, It is fastened upon the right object : for I chiefly rejoice in heavenly and spiritual things, as in God himself ; I can say with the prophet, *He is my exceeding joy*, and, *Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, hereby thou hast put gladness in my heart*. I rejoice also in the word of God, *as one that findeth a great spoil*, yea, *it is the very joy, and rejoicing of my heart* ; yea, then when it searcheth me even to the quick, herein I find an honeycomb. I rejoice in the grace of God wrought in me, and others, as also in my own and their salvation ; *I rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, in the comfortable use

of the sacraments, in prayer, Christian conference, in psalms, and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord. *I am glad when they say unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.* I rejoice in the welfare of Zion: yea, *I can prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Fourthly, it is *the fruit of the Spirit*, not of the flesh, as carnal joy is, which causeth men to rejoice only or chiefly in their corn and their wine, their wealth and their honours, their pleasures and their profits; this nature affords unto them. But I find in me a supernatural joy, in things divine and spiritual; which corrupt nature can take no liking of, much less delight therein; therefore it hath been wrought in me by a power divine, that is, the fruit of God's Holy Spirit. Fifthly, whereas the joy of the wicked is slight and short, a flash and away, no better than the chirping of birds in a sun-shine day: mine is firm and durable; not like summer fruit, which holds good but for a time, for the summer-season of prosperity: but my joy is lasting fruit, which still holds good; yea, even in the hardest winter of greatest adversity, *I can joy in tribulations.* Sixthly,

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it is a victorious joy : for, when as grief like lead lies heavy on my heart, pressing it down, then doth this joy lift up my heart in faith. together with my hands, eyes and voice upward to the heavens, *above the mountains, from whence my help cometh* ; whereby appears, it overcometh grief, and getteth victory over temptation : Thus I have that which is the very life of life, true joy : for life without this, is hardly worthy the name of life.

Min. This pledge of heaven which the Lord hath put into your heart, I may not, nor cannot except against : therefore proceed unto another sign of your salvation.

Con. Patience under the cross may not be left out nor forgotten, no more than it may be cast off, or forgone ; well it deserves a room among this good company of witnesses, all which give in evidence, that heaven is mine. That is a sure sign of salvation, St. James proves it, when he saith, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life* : and that it is in me, my conscience proves it ; therefore I am blessed, but more blessed shall I be when I receive the crown.

Min. Well may the crown indeed be set upon the head of patience, so noble and so conquering a grace: for, Christian suffering is a noble kind of conquering: and he that so suffereth, no less than conquereth. And if you have also found this gem in you, happy are you, provided always that it be true patience, how prove you that?

Con. First, because I do not only find out, but also find fault with any inclination or disposition toward impatience: I check and controul myself for it: when it begins to stir, I begin to stifle it before it gather strength, or get to head. Secondly, I do not go about to prescribe to God the measure of afflicting me; nor yet the manner, means, or time of helping, easing and delivering me: I can be content with the grace of God in the forgiveness of my sin, and sanctification of his Spirit, tho' I want other things; and receive the love of God with good contentment, tho' it came alone, or attended with the cross. Thirdly, I more fear to do the evil of sin, than to suffer the evil of punishment for sin, for, to suffer affliction is not evil, but to commit sin is an evil: and I can be content still

to bear the punishment, so that the sin may be taken away: oh, I would not for any thing that the rod of God should be removed, before the cure be thoroughly wrought. Fourthly, my patience goes accompanied with a profiting under the correcting hand of God: for first it brings forth experience, both of the care, and love, and gracious dealing of God towards me, as also of my own estate and carriage toward him; and thus I come to have better acquaintance with God, and with myself: it also increaseth my love toward him, and makes me cleave and cling faster to him, as a child doth to his parent, when he turneth away from it, and maketh as though he would go away, and leave it to the wolf: it strengtheneth my faith, and causeth me to rely more stedfastly on God, in distresses for time to come, and a dram of tried faith is better than a pound of untried. Lastly, it worketh in me reformation: I am not like wicked Ahaz, who *in the time of his distress, did yet trespass more and more against the Lord.* For I can truly say with the holy prophet, *Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy word,*

O God. Thus by patience I reform myself; and thus in patience I possess my soul: therefore it is true patience.

Min. By what other certain sign are you persuaded of your everlasting salvation?

Con. They which have received the *earnest of the spirit in their hearts*, are thereby *sealed unto the day of redemption*: this have I received, to wit, the infallible testimony of God's holy Spirit, which beareth witness with my spirit, that I am the child of God, and so an heir of glory: seeing God (who cannot lie) tells me by his Spirit, I shall be saved, I hold it (as I am bound) for a necessary, and a most undoubted truth.

Min. Thousands of ungodly ones have a persuasion that they shall be saved, and none seem more confident than they, and yet it is but presumption, and the illusion of the devil in them; for they have no more true right to salvation, than dogs to the childrens bread: yea, and tho' they swear to it too (as that they are ready enough to do) yet you need not credit them, unless you will; and if you do, it is but a lie: as if a woman that had a child should swear she was a maid; or one that had a plague

fore on him, should swear that he were clear; would you believe either of them, for all their facing of the matter? sure you would not: how know you then, that yours is the testimony of God's Spirit, and not presumption, which is nothing else but the stinking spirit of Satan than in the mouths and hearts of all his children?

Con. First, I prove it by the birth of it: for it hath been wrought and planted in me, contrary to nature, by the word of God, God, heard, read, meditated upon, and (who) like good means: whereas presumption like a stinking weed, grows of its own accord, out of the rank soil of nature. Secondly, as Jacob may be known by Jacob's voice, from Esau: so may this be known by its voice; for it doth not barely tell me, I shall be saved, but it proves it to me, and persuades me by all these former which I have alledged and divers others, whereas presumption doth only suggest that conceit unto men, but proves it not; so that when they are asked, why they think they shall be saved, they are not able to allege any sound sufficient reason for the same. Thirdly, the witness within me

speaks the same, that the word of God doth without me, both being the voice of the self-same spirit of God, which cannot contradict itself; but presumptuous presumption speaks contrary to God's word for whereas the scripture saith, *Unless a man be converted, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and, the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and, without holiness, no man shall see the Lord:* and, that the Lord will take vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet presumption bears men in hand, they shall be saved howsoever, and is ready to buze into their ears. O alas, good Sir, pity yourself these things shall not be unto you. Fourthly, God's Spirit doth as well make intercession for me, and therefore brings me to God, making me pray earnestly and fervently to him from a sense and feeling of my manifold sins, with groanings, which cannot be uttered; but presumption drives men further from God, neither worketh any such fervent prayer in them. Fifthly, God's Spirit brings forth the fruits of the Spirit in me, as love, joy, peace, long-suffering

gentleness, goodness, &c. Gal. v. 22. whereas presumption, as it is of the flesh, so it yields the fruits of the flesh, as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, Gal. v. 19. and these are the common fruits of these days, which grow more commonly in towns and houses, than crabs in woods, and hedge-rows: they which bring forth such fruits as these, give heed to the witch that speaks within them; the spirit of Satan, who tells them, they shall be saved as soon as the best, and they believe him: but I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will *speake peace unto his people, and to his saints*; Yea, O Lord, let me hear this thy voice within me, speak louder, that I may hear thee better, O say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

Min. There may appear as manifest a difference between the witness of God's holy Spirit, and the lying suggestion of the devil, to such as are not wilfully blind, as between light and darkness; truth and falsehood: but lest I be burdensome to

you, name one sign more of your salvation, and that shall suffice.

Con. It is no whit irksome to the me of this world to look on their gold and silver, their deeds and leases; nay, they take a marvelous pleasure and delight therein: why then should it be burdensome to the children of God, to view, and look over the marks of their salvation, seeing these are much more precious than gold that perissheth? But for as much as you require but one sign more, I will endeavour to comprehend all under one: In sum then I perceive that I am one of those, whom God hath faithfully promised in his word to save: for though a number of men, yea the greatest number think to get heaven though they have neither scrip, nor sword to shew for it: yet I have both God's word and his writing to shew; or rather his word in writing, that heaven belongs to me. Now the scripture is a true copy, and draught of the book of life, taken out of the court of heaven by God's own hand: so that there can be no error in it: Hereby I know that my name is written in the book of life, because I find myself intro-

led in God's holy scripture, among those to whom he hath promised eternal life.

Min. Indeed if you be of that number, there is no fear but you shall be saved: *for he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* but are you sure, that you are such a one.

Con. Though all that I have hitherto said, and the signs which I have produced, drawn out of the scripture, and grounded thereon, do verify the same, yet (if you will give me leave) I will alledge a few of these divine testimonies, wherein God hath written my name, or my general and manifest character in express connection with his inviolable promise of salvation, and everlasting life. And as you have heard me plead many sure evidences, truly taken out of the grand copy, so now you may also see the grand copy itself: *in the volume of which book I find it written of me, and that in sundry places, that I shall be saved.*

Min. This would I gladly see: proceed then to shew it.

Con. God in his word hath promised, *that he will be nigh unto them, that are of a broken heart, and save such as be of a contrite spirit, and a wonderful cure indeed he will*

work upon them: even then when all helps do utterly give them over, he, like the good Samaritan, will bind up their wounds and pour in the oil of comfort, and wine of gladness; he will take them in his arms, and bring them *into his chambers*; he will take the care of them, and work the cure on them; for none can do it but he, none can cure thoroughly the heart-wound, and such as are sick thereof, but only God: such a one am I; I am bruised and broken in heart and spirit, and distressed in conscience, for my sinfulness and wretchedness; having by my sins (O my sins) so many, great, and grievous, deserved no less than the heavy wrath of God: *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from sin, that unwelcome guest, nay that deadly enemy? I thank my God through Christ; for by him I have deliverance: O still vouchsafe, dear God to visit me thy poor patient; and though I be not worthy with the Centurion, that thou shouldst come under my roof, yet far be it from me, to say as Peter, Lord depart from me, for I am a sinful man; nay, rather therefore come to me, for I have the more need of*

thee; *the whole need not the Physician, but
 the sick*, as I am: thou lookest for such a
 patient, sweet Jesus, and I lack such a phy-
 sician as thou art; Oh be pleased to come
 unto me, pour forth some more of
 thy precious oil into my wounded heart;
 O spread a plaister of thine own heart
 blood, and apply it to my soul, *Stay me
 with thy flagons, and comfort me with thy
 apples, for I am sick of love*: my heart is
 wounded within me, but seeing thou hast
 promised, I know thou wilt perform it;
 that thou wilt cure me, that thou wilt save
 me, being thus perplexed in my soul for
 my sins.

Min. How else can you prove yourself to
 be such an one as God hath promised to
 save?

Con. He hath promised to give to him that
 is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life
 freely; *i. e.* he which earnestly desires the
 favour of God, thro' Christ's righteous-
 ness, to the inheriting of eternal life, shall
 be assured thereof, to the allaying of the
 scalding heat of his boiling conscience, and
 to the endless comfort and salvation of his
 soul: thus I do thirst, I do no less truly

than earnestly desire salvation. First, in the right place, preferring it before all things in the world. Secondly, to the right end, that I might be wholly freed from sin, and perfectly glorify God in heaven. And thirdly, in the right manner, as well desiring the means that lead thereto, as the end whereto they lead. Hereupon it is, that the more grace I receive the more I hunger after, and that I have always such a spiritual drought and unsatiable thirst after Christ's most precious blood and perfect righteousness, that my sinful soul may be clothed with this fine white garment and gorgeous attire; and oh how I long after the favour of God: and like as the disciples said unto our Saviour, when he told them of the bread of heaven; *Lord, evermore give us this bread*: so I, having tasted the sweetness of God's favour, cannot choose but pray, *Lord, give me evermore to enjoy this thy favour: yea, Even as the hart panteth after the water brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, like to the thirsty land.* Well, yet his word is good, *He satisfieth the longing soul, and fill-*

eth the hungry soul with goodness, and this is my comfort.

Min. Whom else hath God promised to save?

Con. *Blessed*, saith our Saviour, *are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; and, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*; these poor ones, and these mourners are they which are humble and lowly in spirit, seeing and feeling their spiritual wants and poverty, their sins and misery, being heartily sorry for, and bewailing the same; and so despairing as touching any goodness of their own, betake themselves wholly to the mercy of God in Christ: which mercy of God is like the beautiful gate of the temple, whereat poor cripples lie, yea, lazars, a multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, withered, spiritual beggars, woful creatures, poor sinners: humbly craving an alms at the hand of so pitiful a God. And well doth God's mercy deserve to be called the beautiful gate of heaven, for hereby only do penitent sinners enter into the presence of God, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enjoy the blessed vision for ever in

heaven. Thus doth a poor creature, lie daily at God's beautiful gate knocking, craving, crying, *Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me, according to the multitude of thy compassions, put away my iniquities; incline thine ear, O Lord, and bear me, for I am poor and needy; O bow down thine ear and bear, open thine eyes and see, for my heart is smitten and withered like grass, and I am in great misery; O turn thy face unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted, look upon my affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sins, O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee; O Lord bear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do, defer not for thine own sake, O my God.* Thus I am poor in spirit, and thus do I mourn, and therefore the promise of blessedness belongs to me, and I have as good right unto it at as any poor sinner whatsoever, for the poorer the sinner is in spirit, the greater beggar he is, the better right he hath hereunto; so then, I am blessed (according to Christ's own words) because I shall be blessed.

Min. Whom else hath God said he will save?

Con. *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved*, as witnesseth the apostle: that is, whosoever not only in outward miseries, but also and that especially in spiritual distresses, shall pray unto the Lord in faith, both as concerning his power, and will to help, and shall heartily in truth and sincerity call upon God, for the gifts of his Holy Spirit, more firmly to believe, soundly to repent, zealously to practise patiently to suffer, constantly to persevere, such a one shall certainly be saved: for thus he takes sanctuary in this strong tower, called *the name of God*, which is far enough out of the reach of Satan's gunshot: and well may we call it sure hope, or sure defence; for though a man be pursued with fiercer and more furious rage of Satan, than ever any man-slayer was, by the avenger of blood to the city of refuge, yet if he can but get shelter under the name of God by hearty invoking and calling thereupon, then he is safe enough; for the name of the Lord is a *strong tower*, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe: and the truth is, whenever a poor sinner being forcibly assaulted by Satan, and very hard

put to, finding in himself no power to withstand, shall unfeignedly cry to the Lord for aid, he shall be preserved: yea, and yet more, whosoever fearing that he hath not saving grace, that he is not in the favour of God, nor his sins pardoned, and that his soul shall not be saved; if he can but find a heart to pray unto the Lord for these things with an honest and upright mind; as sure as the Lord is true, he shall be saved, and that by virtue of this promise of God, *Whosoever shall call upon his name shall be saved*; for thus he flieth unto this strong tower, where he shall be preserved safe a while, and after he shall be removed by the guard of good angels to the palace of non-such in the kingdom of heaven, which is a privileged place; where sin, Satan, the flesh and the world, have nothing to do, and therefore shall not be there molested by any of them in the least measure. Now I am one of them that do thus call upon the name of the Lord, and that daily, when I feel myself oppressed by sin and Satan, and can find very small, or (to my thinking sometimes) no grace at all in me, yet then can heartily pray unto the

Lord, for his help and saving grace, that I may be saved, therefore I shall be saved.

Min. To whom else hath God promised salvation in his word?

Con. Christ hath promised, that *he which overcometh, shall sit with him in his throne*, that is, he that holds out to the end, continually resisting and fighting against his spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, shall have (though not equal glory) yet fellowship with Christ in glory everlasting: thus do I daily fight that I may overcome: First, I account myself a spiritual soldier, bound and sworn to my captain the Lord Jesus, of whom I have also taken press-money, the sacrament of baptism, and wear his colours, the profession of Christianity, and know there is martial law, eternal death for me, if I should fly from my captain.

Secondly, I take notice of the manifold trains, and plots of my foreign enemies, the world and the devil, and the treasons and treacheries of my domestic foes, the flesh that rebel, my head-strong passions and unruly lusts, those traitors: I see and observe, how they every where lay snares

for me, and spread nets in my path-way, and set grins for me, purposing to cause my steps to slide, and to overthrow my soul, these do I see; whereas men of the world see no such snares laid in their ways by their spiritual enemies, for the intrapping of their souls, and the murdering thereof: for ask them, and they cannot tell you of any, but are like Samson, their enemies are upon them, and they fast asleep in carnal security and so the devil prevails against them, puts out their eyes, and leads them captives at his pleasure: he makes a mock of them, and makes sport with him, but at length he falls from jesting, and brings them to destruction in good earnest. Thirdly, whereas these my enemies do continually besiege me, seeking to invade me, I therefore keep daily watch and ward, fortifying in this my little kingdom, the city of my soul, and castle of my heart; I have a special care to look well to the gates and cinque-ports, my outward senses, whereby oftentimes divers traiterous thoughts and rebellious lusts are ready to steal in, which cause very often much mutiny in the soul common-wealth, for if I should grant liber

by for sin to break in, the devil would enter too with his great Armado of his hellish spirits, and would take possession, placing his deputies in strongest holds; as the spirit of blindness in the understanding, of error in the judgment, of lying and slumber in the conscience, of deadness and hardness in the heart, and so in the rest: Thus with his legions would he over-run me, and soon make me desolate. Fourthly, I resolve when I am in the conflict, with the allurements of the world, the incitements of sin, the temptations of Satan rather to die, than to yield to any of them; I propose never to give over fighting, as long as I have any breath within me: not doubting but I shall at length have perfect victory, only through the might of the almighty God, who strengtheneth me. *Fight thou, O God, against them that fight against me, and stand up for my help, through thee I shall do valiantly, for thou shalt tread down my enemies, and bruise Satan under my feet.*

Min. Who else shall be saved according to the tenure of the records of holy writ?

Con. Such as are purged from the pollutions of profane ones, and are sanctified,

are vessels unto honour : that is, they which are made partakers of true grace, and have the image of God renewed in them *which consisteth in holiness and true righteousness*, shall be heirs of true glory ; these are they which are called saints : yea, the Lord himself, that high and mighty potentate is their God-father, for he hath given them this name, what mortal man then dares be so bold, as to nickname them with terms of reproach ; or to find fault with this name of saints, which their heavenly God-father hath given unto them ?

Min. Methinks none should dare once to miscall these, or to deny them their names, saying, we cannot be saints here but let them go : what is true sanctifying grace ?

Con. A new created quality of holiness throughout the whole man, *in spirit, soul, and body*, that is, in mind, will, and all our bodily members ; yea, in all the powers of the soul, and parts of the body wrought in us by God's Spirit, for the honouring of him.

Min. Have you this new quality of holiness in you ?

Con. I dare not deny but God of his mercy, hath begun this work of grace in some weak measure in me: for how could I possibly be thankful to the Lord for such an inestimable gift, if I should not take notice of it, and acknowledge it; especially considering that the very least measure of saving grace that can be, is far more worth than I can express, or praise God for enough, so long as I live? deny it therefore I dare not, though it be very small, lest I should be unthankful to the Lord, for so great a mercy as the least seed of grace is: but this I dare do, to pray to him for more: yea, and I beseech him to make me *rich in all grace, filled with the fruits of righteousness unto his glory and praise;* for he alone is able to build me up further, and to give me an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Min. It appears by all these signs which you have produced, that your assurance is not that common counterfeit ware which goes for current among a number of men, a vain fleeting conceit in the brain, but that you are truly assured of your salvation: I must confess, I can no way mislike these

your evidences having thus examined them, nor, I think, a whole council of divines, if they should sit to determine thereon. I cannot see, how any can pick a hole, or find a flaw herein: and I judge, that you have as good a title to heaven, by these your scripture evidences, as the best landed man in the world hath, or can have, to his best free-hold, by his parchment evidences: But I pray you, now tell me further, are you not sometimes troubled with fear and doubting of your salvation, for all this?

Con. Oh alas, good Sir, I must needs confess that I am, and that not a little to my grief. I am none of those confident fools, which never doubted in all their lives, whereby they give evidence against themselves, that they never yet believed.

Min. But how then? do you not strive against doubting, as being a very evil and pernicious thing?

Con. Yes that I do: for to yield unto that, were to entertain Satan for my counsellor, who is my greatest adversary, and to take him for my Surgeon, to heal my wounded heart, who is my deadliest ene-

my : no, Satan shall not be my Surgeon ; for instead of healing the wounds of my heart, he will make himself more work, he will make more fores than he heals : and those which he seems to heal, he doth but skin over, with the stinking salve of falshood : and the wounds which are, he will make deeper and more incurable : let all good people take heed of this murthering surgen. I have experience enough of him, and therefore though he do impudently obtrude his salve unto me, yet I cast it away from me, that is, I strive against doubting, with all my might and power ; as one would work against the pangs of death, to retain life and breath : and I am bound in conscience so to do, because I know, for as much as I have the true signs of salvation in me, doubting proceeds from the malice of Satan who means me no good, and from unbelief of heart in me, and is much prejudicial to my soul's comfort ; it is also greatly dishonourable to God, for as a man hurts himself most by presuming, so he offends God the greatest wrong, by doubting ; indeed a double wrong : First, he offends

his justice by sinning; then he wrongs his mercy, by doubting of forgiveness; yea, a triple wrong: for it is to call his truth also into question, and to make him a liar: for, *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record, that he gave of his Son,* as saith St. John, and doubting is not believing. It is also great disobedience to God, for he commands to believe, *This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ:* in regard of these infinite injuries offered to God hereby, it must needs be much displeasing to him, and if I were clear of all other sins in the world, yet I should deserve condemnation, for this very sin, if I did not believe. Therefore it stands me highly upon, to withstand doubting, in all these respects, and not to listen to those secret questions, which Satan propounds inwardly unto me by way of doubts, lest by consulting therewith, I should be ensnared, as Eve was: for first he did but propound a question to her, wherein one would think there were no harm, *Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* But whilst she began to think of

this question, he wound further into her, and made her doubt of the truth thereof, and at length grew so strong, as that he perswaded her, she might eat thereof, and that it would be greatly for her good, and advancement: this his old policy he hath not forgotten, but useth at this day, and therefore first propounds secret questions inwardly to the minds of God's children: such questions as seem in shew not hurtful but profitable, that we may know our estate better; as whether the promises belong to us? whether God will keep his promise with us seeing we break our promise and covenant towards him? whether we have faith? whether grace were ever soundly wrought in us? as, though we have had experience thereof formerly, whether we do not presume? whether God will save such unworthy ones as we are? &c. which when we begin to think upon, he draws us to doubting of the truth thereof; and at last gets head, and grows so strong, as that we are ready to be perswaded by him, that it is as he suggests. Thus we often make ourselves work, and puzzle ourselves very much, by consulting with

Satan : for the greatest advantage we have against sin and temptation is at the first ; then it is weakest : but by demur it still grows stronger, and gets ground of us, and winds further into us, by insinuation. Therefore it is wisdom, to watch our time and take our advantage ; to refuse disputation, when he first propounds his question : for he is too subtle a sophister for us to dispute with. This therefore we must do ; we must hold the conclusion in despite of all Satan's premisses : and this indeed will weary him much sooner than the Popish round, *I believe as the Church believeth, and the Church believeth as I believe* : For he is as weary of this, as he is afraid of holy water, and all one. My resolution therefore is this, always to hold the conclusion ; and having once found in me some sure mark of salvation, never after to give any entertainment to doubting ; but so soon as ever it creeps into me, presently to exclude it as the messenger of Satan : not once demur or pause upon it : for the less, the better, and more safe it will be for me, Oh, that I could so do, according

as I do resolve. O Lord, enable me that I may so do.

Min. Indeed, the way to have any ability hereunto, is to ask it of the Lord, *Who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not*: but acquaint me, if you please, more particularly, with some of those things which most, and oftenest trouble the mind.

Con. To keep Satan's counsel, is not, nor cannot be good: therefore I will freely acquaint you with some of those his policies, whereof I have experience in myself. And first to begin at the very root of all, namely, my election to salvation. Sometimes I begin to doubt hereof, and to think that I am not one of the number of God's Elect; and that he hath not decreed before the world was, to save me after the world shall be at an end.

Min. That Satan hath been here, you may see by his footings. And as king David said to the subtle woman of Tekoah, *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?* So say I to you, hath not the subtle serpent had a hand with you in this? that he hath, may appear: for he hath left, as it were, the print of his foul fingers behind;

and you perceive the claws of this roaring lion, where he hath been scraping in the heart, to take out of it that assurance of your salvation, even by the very root, as possible it might be. But tell me, how do you to foil this temptation?

Con. First, I see upon better thoughts that there is no reason, why I should lay blocks in my way: for, Satan will lay down now to bring me to eternal ruin, if he can. And therefore, for me to doubt of that whereof I have no warrant to doubt, is against all reason. Secondly, I see it is an over-curious pride for me to go about to pry into the secret and hidden counsel of God, any otherwise than as he hath revealed the same unto me: for, *secret things belong to God, but things revealed to us.* Therefore, thirdly, I learn by the word, (which is his revealed will) that to be truly called and converted is a certain declaration, that one is elected and predestinated to eternal life; for, thus *the secret of the Lord is revealed to them that fear him.* Therefore finding myself converted, I thus rest quiet in my mind.

Min. That the devil will lie shamefully

you see evidently ; as to tell you that you are not elected, when it is more than he can tell, or all the men in the world beside. Nay, you can tell him that it is a lie, for as much as you are converted : and seeing you have thus taken him in this lie, methinks you should never believe him more, whatsoever he says. For, as this is not the first lie that he hath told, so it will not be the last, I warrant you. But tell me, how else doth he assault you ?

Con. It is my great fault, I must needs confess, to give so much credence to his lies, as I have done : and that I have smarted for thorowly ere now. But to proceed further, he doth assault me, by setting before me my many wants and weaknesses. For I find in me such a poor and weak measure of grace, that at times I make question, whether there be any true grace at all in me : I have no such a feeling of faith as I desire, nor of that joy which at other times I have felt, especially at my first conversion, I am also afraid, that I grieve not enough for my sins ; sure I am, not so much as I would : which makes me doubt

whether these graces be in me at all, and whether I were ever truly converted.

Min. How do you overcome this devil when he thus grapples with you?

Con. Thus I encounter him; I remember what I have learned; that they which see, and heartily bewail in themselves the want of grace, cannot possibly be without true grace: and the Lord respecteth not so much the quantity of grace, as the quality thereof; not how much, but whether it be of the right kind: so that if it be truly in me, though but as a grain of mustard-seed, it is accepted with him. And as for feeling, it is no sure rule to try my estate by; and faith without feeling is stronger and more precious, than faith with feeling. It was not so much for Thomas to believe when he saw and felt, as if he had done neither. It is nothing for a child, being dandled in the lap, to think his father loves him: but when his father frowns and lours upon him, then to be persuaded of his love, is something indeed. And I stand bound in conscience, as well to believe when I want feeling, as when I have it: for God's commandment of be-

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when he hath been daily wonted to it, and yet may enjoy more clear and lightsome days by far, than at the first, and may enjoy also more constant and continual comfort thereby: and like as a beggar, that is advanced to some very great and unexpected honour, joys more at the first therein than afterwards, and yet his dignities and revenues may daily increase and grow far greater than at the first; and like as the church as their first return out of captivity had their *mouth filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing*, and yet enjoyed more good and comfortable days after in the peaceable service and worship of God, than at their first return. As touching my grief for sin, though it make me hang down my head to see the largeness of David's heart this way, and the straitness of mine, for he *made his bed to swim; and watered his couch with his tears*, and I can hardly shed one tear for my sins, yet in that I am afraid, that I do not grieve enough, yea and therefore grieve because I can grieve no more, it is hereby evident that I would fain grieve more; which the Lord accept of: *for if there be first a willing mind, it*

accepted according to that a man bath, and not according to that he bath not : and secondly, though in the intention of my affection, my sorrow for sin seems little, and less than my sorrow for worldly losses ; yet in the estimation of my mind it is greater, because I grieve for my sin, as the greatest evil of all, and so in truth of judgment do account it ; and grieve for the loss of God's favour, as for the loss of the most precious and excellent thing of all : and thus I see that my weakness in grace, is no just cause to make me think that I have no grace, no, not in the least measure.

Min. I pray you proceed further, to shew Satan's cunning in seeking to unsettle and subvert you.

Con. The multitude, and greatness of my sins, which Satan sets before me, do now and then much dismay and affright me, and make me almost faint. I can say with the prophet David ; *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up, they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.* And besides outward sins, I am inwardly much oppress-

ed with hardness of heart, coldness of good affection, dulness of spirit, barrenness of good thoughts, motions and desires, with manifold foul corruptions. I perceive also sundry imperfections in my prayers, and in the best duties; so that when I look back on the service, which I perform to God, I find it such simple, patched and broken service, that I fear, lest he should account it as sin unto me, and that it should be as an abomination to him, and that he should abhor both me and it.

Min. How do you beat back this temptation?

Con. For my sins, I learn and believe that God is able to forgive my greatest sins, as well as the least; yea, all, though bloody sins, *as red^d as scarlet*, and though they be innumerable; for his mercy far passeth my sins, yea, the sins of the whole world. *Great is the Hell of my sins*, saith one, *but greater is the depth of thy mercies, O Lord.* This bottomless deep is not like those pools about Jerusalem, which might be dried up with the trappings of horse and horsemen; but such as all the sins of a thousand worlds cannot dry up. I remember a speech of

an ancient father to this purpose, who, upon those words of Cain, *My sins are greater than can be forgiven*, saith, *Tbou liest Cain, the mercies of God are greater than the sins of all the world*; and no marvel: for, the mercy of God hath all dimensions. It is so deep, that it brought up David's soul from the nethermost hell: it is so high, that *it reacheth to the heavens*: it is of such admirable length and breadth, that it *removeth our sins as far from us, as the East is from the West*. And the cause why the sins of all the world are not pardoned, is not because God's mercy cannot pardon them; but because they cannot repent, that they might be pardoned. So then, I make no doubt, but that God of his mercy is able to forgive my sins, be they what they will be; yea, and further, upon my unfeigned repentance he will forgive: for we cannot be so sinful, as he will be merciful, if for our sins we be heartily sorrowful. For this he hath promised, and by this his promise is become indebted to us, whereas we only by our sins, were debtors to him, so that now he is not only a merciful creditor to us, content to release the debts of

our sins; but also by his promise become our debtor, upon our repentance to give us a pardon, and upon our pardon to give us heaven; O unspeakable mercy! Well, sure I am, he is a true debtor, and will pay what he hath undertaken; therefore I am perswaded, he will forgive my sins; for seeing when he knew all the sins, that ever I should commit, he would notwithstanding in love, send his Son to be my Saviour; whereas he hath now by his death made full satisfaction for them, shall I think the Lord will stick at the pardon of them? Now as concerning the hardness of my heart, I see I need the less to fear it, in regard I have a sight and sense thereof, and unfeignedly bewail the same. For like as it is with a green wound, if it bleed well when it is made, there is the less fear of rankling, and more good hope of curing; so, for as much as I feel my heart bleed, in bewailing the hardness of it, I see there is less danger of festering inwardly to the destruction of my soul. For my weakness in the service of God, though Satan would hereby take occasion to keep me from the word, prayer, and sacraments, perswading

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me, that I do but take the name of God in vain, and profane his worship and increase my own condemnation, yet I am resolved to try masteries with him, and not to neglect God's service, and these holy exercises at any hand; for if he could once give me at this bay, he would triumph indeed: and I further consider to my comfort, that God measureth the obedience yielded to him, rather by the desire, and will to obey, than by the large and exact performance thereof. Though therefore I do not all the good I would, yet seeing in love, I desire to do it; and though I be not wholly rid of all the evil I hate, yet seeing in hatred thereof, I desire to be rid of it, God will accept of that which I do, and will impute unto me that which I desire.

Min. What is it else, that doth disquiet your mind, and interrupt your peace?

Con. Sometimes I fear that all the grace which I have conceived to be in me, and all that I do at any time in the service and worship of God, and the holiness which I make shew of, is but in hypocrisy: which my conceit grows the stronger on me, because I see sometimes some who have been

accounted very rare Christians, far exceeding me in knowledge, seeming zeal, forwardness and other gifts, and yet have fearfully fallen away from the grace of God, and so foully discovered themselves, that it hath appeared evidently, they never had the soundness of grace in them.

Min. This is a fly temptation indeed, for thus the devil transforms himself into an angel of light, as though he loved sincerity, and would have men sincere; whereas he hates nothing more; and therefore while he hus goes about to condemn you of hypocrisy, he shews himself a damned hypocrite: but how deal you with this subtle suggestion?

Con. First, I see I have no warrant to take so near to heart, the fearful examples of backsliding hypocrites, as to question mine own estate therefore: for tho' some earthly comets, and muddy meteors are drawn aloft sometimes, and make a greater blaze, than the true stars of light, but after a short time vanish away; yet the true stars must not therefore, nor will leave their place or shining; and though the wolves sometimes go in sheep's cloathing,

yet must not the sheep therefore forgoe their cloathing, and think themselves to be wolves. Secondly, I consider, that to see, fear and shun hypocrisy, is to be sincere. Whiles then I fear it, I have the lesser cause to fear the danger of it, and am the further from it. Thirdly, I desire rather to be good, than to seem to be so; and to do good rather than to seem to do it: therefore I am not an hypocrite: for he desires the contrary, he looks chiefly to the outside, I to the inside, to my heart, I have an eye to that, especially in two respects: First, supple and soluble, that is, always humble, (for else I cannot be long in spiritual health) and secondly, always hungry, keeping in my heart an appetite unto Christ by faith, and unto all good things in love thereof: and for the maintaining of my heart in this good temper, I use a daily good diet of the soul, namely, watchfulness, meditation, prayer, reading, confession, &c. I am chiefly desirous and careful to know how my estate indeed stands before God, and therefore take pains to examine myself soundly and thoroughly, and am very willing to be tried by others;

this working thorow-stitch, the hypocrite cannot brook. Fourthly, the hypocrite doth not use to go to God in secret by prayer, (when he thinks none knows, sees, or hears him) and that in conscience being acquainted with the distress of his own soul, and privy to his own corruptions, to bewail them to God, and to cry for grace; but this I do: neither yet would I have once mentioned this my practice unto you, (for fear of vain-glory) but that I now stand upon my trial, and must in this case produce all the witnesses I can. Fifthly, I find in myself, that I should be full sorry, that all should be but in hypocrisy in me: O, I would not for all the world it should be so: yea, I desire from my very heart, that it may be in sincerity; hereby I am perswaded, that it is not in hypocrisy, but in sincerity.

Min. You say well; how else do you withstand this temptation?

Con. I may perceive in my greatest fear and doubting, that some of the signs of salvation are in me in truth, as first, hatred of sin, for though there were no hell (as I have said before) I would not commit those

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ins which some do (though corrupt nature do relish them very well) my soul goes against them. Secondly, I make conscience of lesser sins, (which the world count no sins) as well as of those great and gross sins, which stare us in the face: and though some would shrink up sin into a narrow scantling, and fain would bring it to this, that none do evil but they which are in jails, yet I have learned otherwise to judge of sin to abstain from all appearance of evil; holding it a point of wisdom, to look to sin in time, lest it fester, and eat in, and infect more, and at length break forth into a running sore. Thirdly, I love the godly in sincerity, not for fear of hell, (that cannot make me love them) nor for any sinister respects, but because they are godly. Fourthly, when I go to the word preached, sacraments, prayers, and all other holy exercises of religion, I heartily desire to use them, not for form or custom, (as the manner of most is) but with profit, and therefore lift up my heart to the Lord, craving his blessing in the use thereof for the edifying of me in grace, and for the ripping of my corrupt heart: an hypocrite,

doth not thus. Fifthly, though the Lord should condemn me, (which he never will) and throw me into hell (which in regard of his faithful promise he neither will nor can) yet I find my heart so affected that sure I should never blaspheme his holy name with the devils and damned spirits but even out of the bottom of the lowest pit should I praise him, yea, out of the very belly of hell (as the prophet Jonah speaketh) should I pray unto him : so that, I see I love the honour of God, neither for fear nor favour, but in sincerity : whereby I also gather, and conclude, that I am sincere and not an hypocrite.

Min. Be there yet any more evil spirits of Satan, sent of him to vex you, that put you in fear and would make you believe lies ?

Con. Sir, it is not for nothing that their name is *Legion*, for *they are many* : there is another which doth not seldom molest me ; for when I cannot deny, upon a right trial taken of myself, but that the grace of God, is in some measure begun in me, yet then sometimes steps in a shameless messenger of Satan, much like his master,

that hath forsworn all shame and truth, thinking to out-face me, and bear me down by main strength; he will needs face me down that I shall not continue in grace: the way to heaven so strait and difficult, my skill so little, my weakness so great, my enemies so many, mighty, crafty, resolute and malicious, that it is not possible for me to hold out to the end, that I might be saved.

Min. Dare you look this Goliath in the face, or enter combat with him?

Con. Yes, that I dare, and do, and will do all my days, because he blasphemeth the living God, as though he could lie, or did repent; but *I do not trust in my own power, neither can my sword save me*: I do not betake myself to my own strength, good mind, and meaning, freewill, &c. as blind Papists and others do, for these are weapons of Satan's own making; and be sure he will make none to hurt himself withal: therefore I take unto me, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; this I brandish against the tempter, and tell him as it tells me, that *the love of God is an everlasting love; and whom Christ loveth he lov-*

eth to the end; and none can pluck me out of his hand, neither men nor devils; and nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ, neither life, nor death, height, nor depth, things present, nor things to come, no, not sin itself, which is most likely of any thing, for that lies pining and waiting in me, in as much at the first instant of conversion it fell into a deep consumption and that incurable, all the drugs of that old empiric the devil, can never restore it to perfect strength again: therefore I shall endure to the end, and in the end be saved, for all that. Secondly, for the better animating of me to persevere, I look unto Christ the author and finisher of my faith, he held out to the end in suffering for me, why should not I then hold out to the end in serving of him? he would not leave me in hell fire, why then should I leave him in the heat of temptation, or in the cold bleak wind of affliction? Well, I am confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun the good work in me, will perform it until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Min. What is there else which doth perplex your mind?

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Con. I am now and then grievously afraid, that I do but presume, in being persuaded that I shall be saved by Christ: partly, because I am so very sinful, and my unworthiness is so great; and partly because, methinks, I do not grieve enough for my sins.

Min. What help do you use against this shaking fit?

Con. First, I consider, that it is but spiritual pride, in the habit, and shew of great humility, to fear to believe, because of our great sinfulness, and unworthiness; for thus we shew we would have something of our own to bring to God, or else we dare not trust him: we would spy some righteousness and worthiness in ourselves, before we be persuaded of salvation, and so not to be beholden to God: this proceeds from the poisonous root of pride, and natural popish desire of meriting at the hands of God. Secondly, I must not hang off from believing, till I find that I grieve enough for my sins: this were to set the cart before the horse. In as much as godly sorrow for sin, proceeds from faith, therefore I must not stay to believe till I

find more godly sorrow, but I must believe more, that I may grieve more for my sins; for the more faith, the more godly sorrow. Thirdly, indeed if I had been never humbled in the fearful sight of my sins, and a sense of the heavy load thereof, then I should presume, if I did perswade myself in that estate to be saved: but now I see, and feel my sins, and misery, and what extreme need I have of Christ, God calls me as verily as it were by name, Mat. xii. 28. to come unto Christ, that is, to believe in him, therefore there can be no danger in so doing, I cannot sin, or presume in being perswaded that I shall be saved by Christ; for that perswasion which follows sound humiliation is faith; that which goes before is presumption. Therefore I may well be out of fear, that my believing is presuming; nay, I cannot do amiss in being perswaded, that I shall be saved, I cannot be forward enough herein: but this belongs not at all to them that were never troubled in mind, nor wounded in conscience for the greatness of their sins, the dread of hell, and horrible wrath

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of God due to them for their sins: for they indeed presume.

Min. I like and approve well of this that you say; but let me hear if there be any further matter, which causeth doubting in you.

Con. Evil thoughts, and cogitations are no small dauntment to me: for never was the land of Egypt more pestered with noisome vermin, than I am with foul, filthy, impious, yea, sometimes blasphemous thoughts against the holy Majesty of God, they come upon me thick and three-fold, I can at no time, in no place, be quiet for them, yea, when I am in the presence of God, speaking unto him by prayer, or he speaking to me by his word, or when I am about any other holy duty, even then they come crowding in on me, I wonder sometimes with myself how, or which way they should so creep in, to amaze and astonish me, and withal to choke and interrupt the holy business I have in hand: the ugliness of these evil thoughts works horror and quaking in my heart, and makes me think myself no better than a fire brand of hell, and that I might do well (O Lord, forgive

that horrible and murdering thought) to make away with myself.

Min. This seems to be as strong a devil as any, that drives you thus near the gates of death, (I had almost said of hell) how do you to recover strength and to get the victory over him?

Con. Strong he is indeed, but *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.* First, therefore I consider, that I do not love, like, and approve of these evil thoughts, wherewith I am so cumbered, nay, I abhor them, as the devil himself, by whom they are hatched, insomuch that they make me even weary of myself, because of the stinking breath thereof, continually steaming forth, ready almost to choak my soul; and when Satan by these thoughts, doth break in violently upon me, I do not bid him welcome, and lay him, as it were, a cushion, to take up his seat in my mind, and heart, to have residence in me, by these so vile and horrible motions, and cogitations: but I deal by him and them, as men do by thieves, that break into their houses at unawares, they give them no abode, but hunt and drive them out again,

so soon as ever they come within the threshold, with all the speed and power that they can : and therefore the Lord will not account me a friend unto them, much less the father of them ; I shall not bear their name, much less the burden of them, he will never lay them to my charge, to answer for them. Secondly, I am resolved, as long as I live, for so long I shall be troubled with them, to resist them with all my might. And like as Jacob ceased not to wrestle, though his thigh was bruised, till he had the blessing ; so neither will I, till I have got the victory. Thirdly, I know that the Lord will not be angry with me for these evil thoughts which I consent not to, nor take no pleasure in, but hate : for will a tender mother be angry with the babe she bears in her arms, because some naughty people sling stones at it, hurt it, and make it cry ? nay, will not rather her bowels yearn towards it ? will she not rather hug it closer to her, stroak it, kiss it, and bemoan it ? but her anger is towards them that sling stones at it, whereby they bruised and battered the face of it, she could find in her heart to fly in their face, and to

scratch out their eyes, that did her child that harm: surely then the Lord will not be offended with me, because my enemies, Satan, and the flesh, cast fiery darts at me, and thereby wound me; for I cannot help it: but his fierce indignation is against them, for that they do so molest me, and he doth, and will both pity, and help me so much the more: for *as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*: and his affection towards his children is infinitely far surpassing the affection of the most tender hearted mother in the world towards her dearest babe; for *though a mother could forget the child of her womb, yet would not I forget you, saith the Lord.*

Min. Yet a little more, I pray you let us hear of Satan's deep subtilty, and helish policy, in labouring to defeat you of all true comfort here, and of heaven itself hereafter.

Con. Sometimes he would needs persuade me, (and my own heart withal is over-greedy, I confess, to catch up and swallow such poisoned morsels) that I am none of God's children, and that the Lord

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doth not love me, because I am kept so near and bare, and am so followed continually with afflictions. I am hardly free at any time from one or other; they are like Job's messengers, while one is speaking to me, before he hath done his message fully, there comes in another, sickness, pains, aches, loss of friends, goods, good name, outward crosses and calamities innumerable, beside the inward affliction of the mind; Oh, that is the greatest of all, for a wounded spirit who can bear? a rare thing it is not to see me under some one or other of these, to keep me down: whereas, I see the wicked wallow in their wealth, as they do in their wickedness, and Esau's portion is the fatness of the earth; they swim up to the chin in rivers of oil, and *wash their paths with butter: their breasts are full of milk, and their bones run full of marrow: their faces are covered with fatness, and they have collops in their flanks: yea, their eyes stand out for fatness, and they have more than their heart can wish: yea, their very heart is as fat as grease: they are so fat, so lusty and strong, that they kick up their heels against their keeper,*

and will not know their daily benefactor, but contemn their master: *They say to God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches; but as for me, poor wretch, All the day long have I been punished, and chastened every morning; hereupon my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped; for I began to think that these were God's darlings, at least myself none of God's beloved ones; for the rod of God is not on them; but never off from me.*

Min. What means do you use to be preserved against the violence of this assault?

Con. I presently take sanctuary, and so am safe, *I go into the sanctuary of God* (and consult with his word) *and then I understand their end;* I see a man may go through a fair city to execution; and contrarywise, through a narrow stumbling lane to a feast or coronation; I see well why it is that the wicked do so prosper and fare so well, for why do men set up their oxen a fattening? is it not against the day of slaughter? so the wicked are reserved to the day of destruction, *they shall be brought forth unto the day of*

wrath; the servants of God are kept at hard commons, but they have their keeping of free cost. *The wicked which are strangers from the womb*, and none of God's household, have larger cats, and far better, but they shall pay sweetly for it in the end, when the reckoning comes: so that all things considered, I see small reason why I should hew a stumbling block out of the prosperity of the wicked, to my own overthrow. Secondly, I labour in time of affliction, to spy out the love of God shining unto me through some little peep-hole or other: at length I find that even then I love God; hereby I discern that he loves me, for so he saith, *I love them that love me*; and indeed his love to me is the cause of my love to him, so that it is impossible for me to love him in the time of my affliction, but he must needs love me much more. Thirdly, I consider that it is for want of wit in a child, to think that his father cannot abide him, because when need is, he useth the rod to correct him: for they which are of discretion can tell, that the father loves the child never the worse for all that, but the better; yea, this

very dealing of God towards me is an evident token of his love unto me, for, *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*; if therefore we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? So that the Lord cometh to me with fire in the one hand, and water in the other; the fire of affliction to melt out the dross of my corruptions, and the cooling water of comfort and assurance of his favour to allay the heat thereof, lest I should be overmolten with heaviness and sorrow: but indeed sometimes he holds this behind him, that I see it not, but I must not be so unwise as to think, because I see it not, therefore he hath it not: because I see not his love, or at least not so as I would, that therefore he loves me not, far be it from me so to think, though I am too ready so to think in my distress: but it is my infirmity. For as verily as he doth afflict me, and I feel it, so certainly doth he love me, though I feel it not. Fourthly, I consider that this is the cup which Christ himself drank of, he drank it off to the very bottom, which made him cry out of the

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bitterness of it, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* whereas I do but drink a little of the uppermost; but seeing Christ my Saviour hath begun to me therein, needs must I pledge him, though it be but to kiss the cup: which is also a cup of God's own tempering, and therefore very good and wholesome, tho' not so toothsome, he knows all the ingredients perfectly that go into it, and there is not one drop or dram of bitter aloes in it, more than he sees must needs be put in, or else it would do us no good: which also is skilfully corrected and sweetly qualified with those heavenly sweets that far surpass the honeycomb, as peace of conscience, tranquility of mind, patience, and joy, of each a dram, and the hope heaven, a marvellous sweet thing, which itself alone, methinks, might well allay the tartness and sharpness of affliction: this is my comfort in time of grief, my friend in time of need, my best physic in time of sickness, and present remedy against all maladies; and I dare undertake that one dram of this, well taken of a sick man, shall do him more good at heart, than twenty pounds worth of the most precious

apothecaries stuff. O, it is a most sovereign restorative, and happy is he that is never without some of it in his heart. It is of such singular use at all times, and upon all occasions. Now seeing afflictions are thus sweetned to us, properly to speak, they deserve no worse name, than bitter-sweets, whether we respect inward distresses, or outward calamities. Truth indeed, the Lord lays more on some, than he doth upon others, and more on us at one time than he doth at another: he sometimes strikes an heart vein, when another will not serve, and that we cannot bleed well at it, with godly sorrow; yet this I dare avouch, he never puts us to more pain, than needs must for our profit, and benefit. Fifthly, I enter into serious meditation of the manifold good, which cometh by affliction, according to that of the holy prophet, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted*: this is the physic that God doth minister to his servants, and it is both purging physic and strengthening physic: for the former of these it pleases the Lord hereby, sometimes to discover and bring to our sight the disease of some sin, wherewith we are infect-

ed, whereof we had taken no notice before; and then to bring us to humiliation for it, so to work the removal thereof: sometimes he doth hereby prevent some sin, whereto he sees us very subject, by purging out the ill humours of self-love, covetousness, lukewarmness, which else, in time would break forth into dangerous, yea, incurable diseases: and thus he works a miracle upon us, turning the serpent sin into the rod of affliction, as Moses' rod was turned: alas, how ready are we to run out at random after these earthly things, to set our affections too much upon them, and to be taken up too much with them, to grow not only wanton, but even wild with the things here below and how easy a matter is it for a man, to lose both himself, and heaven too, in running up and down in the maze of this small world? which that we may not do, the Lord that good shepherd, useth his rod and staff: when we straggle too far on the pleasant green pastures of worldly gains and pleasures, he fetcheth us in again, then he begins to hamper and shackle us with sundry crosses, to keep us better within compass, to make us mind home

better, and to make us better husbands for our souls, that so we may think of him in time of adversity, who had almost forgotten him in time of prosperity: sometimes he sees that we trust to the arm of flesh, and lean too much to some outward means, then by a cross he takes it away, that so we might wholly and only rely on him. Manifold corruptions, and much filth of sin do we gather, by walking in this dirty world: the Lord doth use the waters of affliction, as a bath to cleanse and purge us from those corruptions, in bringing us thereby to a sight thereof, and humiliation for the same: in these and the like respects, well may affliction be termed God's purging physic. Sometimes he also useth it for strengthening physic, when as he doth afflict his servants for their trial, for the strengthening of their faith, patience, love, zeal, holy desires, &c. for these and the like graces, the more they are exercised the more they are confirmed, and the stronger they grow: and even inward afflictions of the mind, serve greatly to these good ends. O blessed rod of God, that doth so much good! Did I think the Lord

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loved me not, because his rod lay on me! Oh how could I be without it? surely it is as needful for me as my meat and drink, and much more needful too. O scourge me, and launce me here, O Lord, that thou mayest spare me for evermore hereafter. Sixthly, as touching outward calamities, I have learned at length a little wisdom, by God's word, for the right demeaning of myself therein; not to look downward, on the rushing and roaring streams of miseries and troubles, which run so swiftly under me; for then I should be taken with a giddiness in the head, which would make me think, and speak unadvisedly of God's dealing, and my own estate, and so I should be in hazard of being drowned and overwhelmed therein: but this I do, I fasten my eyes upon the sure stay by which I am upheld, that is, *God all-sufficient*; and stedfastly behold his promise in the midst of all miseries: thus, I praise God, I pass over many a dangerous deep: *when one deep calleth to another, at the noise of the water-spouts*, when one trouble comes on the neck of another, I pass over, or wade through safe and sound. Seventh-

ly, as I desire to prepare for affliction before it cometh; so do I in like manner beforehand, to hold fast my assurance of the love of God; and so to bear it as comfortably as may be, when it shall come; observing that it is the work of Satan, to make me utterly discomfortable in tribulation; that heaven our country, and holiness the way thereto, might both be brought out of credit by my means; that others, beholding my uncomfortableness, might be discouraged from entering, or proceeding in the happy way to life. By the grace of God, Satan shall not make me his scar-crow, in the way of heaven, to keep others out, nay, rather, by my sweet and lightsome deportment of myself therein, I will allure others, what I may; rather to chose the way of the cross, the way to the kingdom, than for fear of the cross, to lose and forgoe the kingdom.

Min. It is a good resolution: and sure it is not for any ill-will, that the Lord corrects his children, whether with inward afflictions of mind, or outward of body, friends, children, goods, good name; or howsoever else, his love is never the less

unto them, and he is never the further from them; and though they greatly fear sometimes, yet they have no more cause to fear, than the disciples had, when Christ came walking to them upon the sea, thinking that they had seen a spirit; to whom our Saviour answered, *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid*; even so, when the raging winds and blustering storms of afflictions do cause an earthquake in our hearts, the Lord sends forth a calm quiet voice, to the comfort of his children, *It is I, be not afraid*; which all they may easily hear, that will but lay their ear to the word of God, and listen thereunto; for so he speaks unto them therein. Now if there be any other matter that troubles your mind, alledge it if you will for conclusion of all, lest I also be one of them that trouble you.

Con. Why then, if you think good, we will end with that, that shall end our lives, namely, death: I greatly fear sometimes that I am not as I should be, because I find in myself such struggling with the thoughts of death, and that I am so afraid, yea, and unwilling to die.

Mir. How do you to repel and overcome this assault?

Con. First, I consider, that they which are truly in Christ by faith and living members of him, may have, and have all of them some fear of death for all that; tho' it can do them no harm; like a man that seeth the sting of a serpent plucked out before his eyes, and therefore knows it cannot hurt him; yet hath some fearfulness in him to handle it, and put it into his bosom, because of that natural enmity, and antipathy, that is between him and it: *the sting of death is sin*, which Christ hath plucked out, in *being made sin for us*, and satisfying fully for it, so that well may we say, *O death where is thy sting?* and yet we are afraid of the very looks of death, but more afraid to come nigh it, because we naturally hate death: this therefore is no good reason, to make me think myself none of Christs, because I have some fear of death; no more than it is to prove a man, no man, or reasonable creature, because he is loth to put a snake in his bosom, when the sting is plucked out. Secondly, I take up such meditations, as ~~will~~ make me better and

more familiarly acquainted with death, and may make me better conceited of it, and to take better liking to it: as first, that it is the common lot of all the sons of Adam, none exempted, no, not the worthies of the world, and holy patriarchs; and should I then desire to be exempted? death hath his warrant to take hold of every sinner; therefore none can be spared, for all have sinned: but before he comes himself, he sends forth many summons to warn men to appear at court before God: every ach, pain, sickness, faintness, weariness, yea, every wrinkle, or gray hair, or dead corpse, is death's summons, to warn our appearance; but because we are too regardless, and make too light hereof, at length he comes personally, with a special writ from the Most High and mighty Monarch of all the world, with a *capias corpus*, first for one, and then for another, and at last for us all. Now, whereas because of this necessity of death, many take care how to do when death comes, I will chiefly take care how to do before it comes: for if I live well, I shall be sure to die well; this shall be therefore my chiefeⁿ, how to live

well. Again, I labour to pluck away that grim and ghastly vizard of the curse, which death hath upon it, and to look at it thro' Christ, and then behold it hath a lovely countenance and friendly look, ready prepared as the groom of God's chamber, kindly to embrace me, and to bring into God's presence: and what is death else to the faithful, but as *the valley of Achor; the door of hope*; to give entrance to their souls into the paradise of God, where are joys unspeakable, ravishing the heart, and pleasures at his right hand for evermore! and what is the grave but a mould, wherein the Lord doth cast our bodies into a new form, making them incorruptible, which before were corruptible? so *changing our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like the glorious body of his Son*. What is life but a wearisome way, and death to the godly a comfortable home? should the faint and weary traveller be loth to draw near home? what is life but a toilsome labour, and death to the righteous, a sweet rest and sleep? should rest be unacceptable, or sleep unwelcome to a toiled labourer? What is that which doth disrobe the faithful of all the base rags

of sin and misery, and clothes them with the most sumptuous garments of perfect righteousness, glory and immortality? is it not death? who would not be contented to be stripped naked of beggarly robes, that so he might be apparelled with gorgeous attire? Thus then, though I see some reasons why I might desire to live long, yet I see more reasons why I might much better desire to die soon: but none at all, why I should be unwilling to die, *to be present with the Lord*: for, *whilst we are at home in the body*, we are absent from him, and as it were in prison. The body is the prison of the soul, and the earth of the body; as we must not break prison (for that is greatly displeasing to the Lord:) so when the prison door is set open to us by authority, as when death is sent unto us, he comes with authority, we should very gladly and willingly depart, yea, and go forth singing with old father Simeon (a *Nunc demittis*) Lord, *now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*. Upon these and the like meditations of death, I find in myself some willingness to die: and that I may be still more willing, I labour to have my thoughts

more and more taken up therewith, and at least once a day to look him in the face, that I may be still better acquainted with him: for the more acquaintance I have with death, the more friendship shall I find at his hands, when he comes to apprehend me? and on whom doth he look so fowr and grim, as on them that are strangers to him, and he to them? and as every day I hold it a point of wisdom to get some further acquaintance with death; so especially upon the occasion of sickness; for every sickness is a little death. I therefore endeavour so to die often, by making good use of every fit of sickness, that I may once at the last die well, that so, when my departing shall come, it may be a sweet and acceptable sacrifice to the Lord: whether it be a burnt offering, by the violent death of martyrdom, or at least a peace offering, by a natural death, I desire that it may be a free-will offering, not wrung from me per-force, but freely surrendered into *the hands of God, a faithful Creator*: and if my life be willingly offered, (which I desire from my heart it may be, and therefore know it shall be) then shall it be well and

favourably accepted; for *in the fight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

Min. The Lord hath given you good wisdom to discover, and put to flight these forces and assaults of Satan the deadly enemy of all the seed of man, but especially of *the seed of the woman*, the Church, Rev. xii. 17. I see you are endowed with some good skill, to dispel the gross thick clouds of doubting, whereby the devil laboureth to over-cast your evidences, that either you should not see them at all, or else very dimly, with little comfort, *thanks therefore be to God for this unspeakable gift*: but what if you could find none of the signs of salvation in you at all, which you have acknowledged to me; how then?

Con. Time was when I had not any one of them, and then I was in the estate of damnation, though I thought myself in as good an estate as the best, and the devil then perswaded me so too, though since he hath changed his note; for he must needs go against the truth, or else he is not himself) yet since I see, that if I had died in that estate, I had without all fail gone head-long into hell: and in the self

same case are as they, which have none of those signs in them. St. Peter puts a question to them, which puts all such to silence and makes them speechless now, but what will it do hereafter then? where shall the ungodly and impenitent sinner appear? let the bravest mind, the proudest, the stoutest stomach of them all answer it if he can: alas, alas, poor wretches, they can none of them answer it.

Min. They which have not one of the signs of salvation in them, are in a woful case indeed; but what if a man can find but one sign in him, and not all?

Con. He that can find but one of these true signs in him, hath cause of comfort; for though there be but one good apple growing upon a tree, it proves both that there is life in that tree, and that it is not a choke pear, or crabstock, but a good tree: but in truth, where there is one of these signs of salvation in a man, there they are all in some poor measure, though he do not so sensibly, and evidently perceive all alike.

Min. It rejoiceth me not a little to find you so well provided for the Lord; Oh

appy estate that you are in: for nothing now can come amiss to you, come life, come death, you are the Lord's. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your heart, and stablish you in every good word, and work, and preserve you to that inheritance, which is incorruptible, reserved in heaven for us.

Con. Even so Lord Jesus, Amen, Amen.

F I N I S.

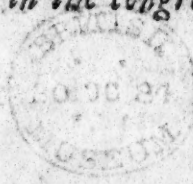
Pfalm xxxii. 11.

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Pfalm i. 4, 5.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment; nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.



12/7/55 n. 11.5.

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